

Youth ! Arise, Awake and Adopt the Right Path of Life

(A compact Self-Guide for the modern students and youth on the "Right Path of Life" for laying a proper and strong foundation of life during their youth period and for living a successful, purposeful, prosperous, happy and peaceful human life upon this earth plane)

Volume - 11

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This book is meant for free distribution amongst the modern students and youth, with a fervent prayer to them to kindly study the book earnestly and carefully and put the knowledge gained from the teachings contained in the lessons of the book into practice in their day-to-day life sincerely and diligently, for their own highest good and supreme welfare.

Views of Students and Youth, Teachers and Professors, Educationists and Academicians, School, College and University Administrators, Editors of News Papers and all other Readers, on this book are humbly and earnestly invited in the following address:-

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LESSON - 10

ONE'S PRESCRIBED DUTIES— (SVADHARMA)

ONE'S PRESCRIBED DUTIES
(SVADHARMA)
(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

1. WHAT IS SVADHARMA ?

There is no proper equivalent in English for the Sanskrit term 'dharma'. It is generally rendered as 'duty' or 'righteousness'. Any action that is best calculated to bring liberation and exaltation is dharma. That which brings well-being to human beings is dharma. That which secures preservation of being is dharma. Dharma is extremely subtle, intricate and complex — even sages are perplexed. The word 'dharma' comes from the root 'dhri' which means 'to support' or 'to hold on'.

'Svadharma' means one's own duty in accordance with one's caste and order of life, which are founded according to the qualities born of the nature of man.

God, religion and dharma are inseparable. Man evolves through the practice of dharma according to his caste and order of life, and eventually attains Self-realization — the ultimate goal of life — which brings infinite bliss, supreme peace, unbroken joy, highest knowledge, eternal satisfaction and immortality.

The mark of dharma is good conduct. Higher than all the teachings is good conduct. From that, dharma is born; and dharma enhances life. By good conduct man attains fame, power and strength here and hereafter. It is the highest dharma and the root of all austerity.

THE CASTE SYSTEM

The four castes in Indian society are brahmana, kshatriya, vaishya and sudra.

"Self-restraint, serenity, patience, austerity, purity, belief in God, forgiveness, self-sacrifice, uprightness, truthfulness, wisdom, teaching and studying the Vedas, doing

sacrifices and also guiding others in offering sacrifices and gifts and receiving gifts, are the duties of a brahmana born of his own nature." (Bhagavad Gita XVIII: 42)

"Courage, generosity, vigour, prowess, splendour, firmness, dexterity, not fleeing from battle, the nature of a ruler, protection of the people, gifts, doing sacrifices and study of the Vedas are the duties of a kshatriya born of his own nature." (Bhagavad Gita XVIII: 43)

"Ploughing, protection of cattle, trade, charity, doing sacrifice, study of the Vedas, engaging in commerce, finance and agriculture are the duties of a vaishya, born of his own nature. To serve ungrudgingly all these castes is the duty of a sudra, born of his own nature" (Bhagavad Gita XVIII: 44)

Much of the evil in this system has grown through men of one caste grasping at the work of the other castes, and thinking more of the rights his caste gives him than of the duties it imposes.

The brahmana and kshatriya have claimed their privileges ardently and have shrunk from the heavy burden belonging to their castes. Naturally their attitude has provoked opposition, and antagonism has replaced mutual goodwill and service. Consequently caste has become a social bitterness, instead of being a framework maintaining all in happy order. If people of different castes practise their dharmas, caste confusion will pass away and abundant peace and joy will prevail.

Lord Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "*The four castes were created by Me, by the different distribution of qualities and actions; know Me to be the author of them, though actionless and inexhaustible*" (Bhagavad Gita IV:13)

Throughout the world this classification of caste exists. The catholic priests and the reverend clergymen represent the brahmins. They do meditation and preaching. The soldiers of the West are the kshatriyas. The business people in the West

are the vaishyas. Those who do menial service are the sudras. (This classification is according to the quality of man.) Those who are sattvic are brahmins; those who are rajasic are kshatriyas; those who are tamasic are the sudras. (This classification is according to gunas and karma.)

THE FOUR STAGES OF LIFE

The ashramas or stages in life are four: brahmacharya, the stage of studentship; grihastha, the stage of householdership; vanaprastha, the stage of forest-dwelling or seclusion; and sannyasa, the order of total renunciation. Each order of life has its own duties. In none of these stages must a man grasp at the special duties of the other three. At the present moment it is difficult to maintain or observe the exact details of the ancient rules, as the conditions have changed very much, but if we can have a clear idea of the fundamental duties of each, we shall still be able to shape life to a regulated course of development and steady growth.

The life of the student or brahmachari is described in the *Manu Smriti*: “*Let the student ever engage in the study of the Vedas and in doing service to his preceptor. Let him refrain from wine, meat, tasty dishes, perfumes, garlands, company of women, and from injury to sentient creatures. Let him give up lust, anger, greed, dancing, singing and playing on musical instruments, dice-play, gossip, slander and untruth.*

“*Let the student always sleep alone and let him not waste his seed; he who from lust destroyed his seed, destroyed his vow. He should develop the spirit of service, humility and obedience. He should mould his character properly. He should be chaste in thought, word and deed.*”

A brahmachari should study religious books till he reaches the age of twenty-five. If he has taken the vow of life-

long celibacy to become a life-long brahmachari he need not enter the stage of a householder. He can devote his whole life to spiritual pursuits. He should have real lasting dispassion and discrimination. Then only will he be really benefited.

If he does not want life-long brahmacharya, after finishing his duties the student enters the order of grihastha, when he is ready to take up the duties and responsibilities of the householder's life. Of all ashramas, that of the householder is the highest, as it verily supports the other three. Herein he can help the brahmachari, the vanaprasthi and the sannyasin. If one leads a well regulated household life, there is no need for sannyasa. Most sannyasins are failures in their household life and therefore they had to take to sannyas. A disciplined householder is better than a sannyasin. Living in this world with all its responsibilities, he lives a religious life.

So, remaining as a householder, one should help the sannyasins, help the poor, nurse the sick. These are the virtues that householders should practise. One-tenth of income should be set apart for helping the poor. Thus you can grow in spirituality and attain God-realisation in your own house.

Eknath and Guru Nanak were householders. Lord Rama and Lord Krishna were householders. Therefore, marriage is no hindrance to spirituality and God-realisation. You must live a life of detachment, prayerfulness, worshipfulness, meditation, realisation, aspiration and renunciation. You should not think that when you retire you will come to Hardwar and do sadhana. You must start your quest for God-realisation even now. When you are young the mind is very pliable. Samskaras can be easily formed. A little meditation, a little japa, a little pranayama, a little asana — all these will help you to attain God-realisation.

As all the streams and rivers flow to rest in the ocean, so all the ashramas flow to rest in the householder. This is the

field for developing various virtues such as mercy, love, generosity, patience, tolerance, purity, prudence and right judgement. The central teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Yoga Vasistha* is that Self-realisation should be attained in and through the world.

If a brahmachari does not want to take up the course of life-long celibacy, he can become a householder. He can marry after finishing his education. He can visit his wife occasionally for bringing progeny to keep up the line and not for sensual gratification. He will be styled as a brahmachari if he strictly adheres to the above rule. After he has finished the stage of a householder and after fixing up his son in a proper position, he can become a vanaprasthi, either alone or with his wife. He should not remain in the house till the end of life. He will be having various anxieties and attachment for children if he remains in the house. If he finds it difficult to leave he can remain in a cottage outside the house. If he finds this also difficult, he can remain upstairs or in a solitary room and can have interviews with the visitors and members of the house in the evening between 4 and 5.

If a vanaprasthi wants to take sannyasa, he can do so. Vanaprastha is only a preparatory step to sannyasa.

The glory and freedom of a sannyasin can hardly be described. A sannyasin only can cut off all sorts of attachments. Otherwise some sort of subtle connection will always remain. When once one takes sannyasa, he becomes a dead man to the family members. Otherwise they always think of getting something from him. The subtle attachment in the mind still remains in both parties. This is quite sufficient to bring one back to the wheel of birth and death. The very colour of the orange robe gives strength and purity. I do not believe those people who say: "We have given colouring to our hearts." This is timidity and hypocrisy. There are still delusion, attraction and subtle desires lurking in them. If there is internal change the external change is bound to come.

DUTIES OF MAN

Man has certain important duties and responsibilities in life. He has to evolve morally and spiritually by performing these duties in the right manner. He has to act and live according to the law of God. He has to find out the rules of conduct and the measure of his responsibilities. He must have a thorough knowledge of right and wrong and must act accordingly. Then only can he be rightly called a man.

Man has duties towards parents, children and other family members. He has duties towards society and the country. He has duties to his own self, and, last but not the least, he has important duties towards God. He must fulfil all these duties of his life. Then only he can find progress in his life. Then only will he enjoy real peace of mind.

He must serve his parents who have given him this physical body, with great faith and feeling. In the *Taittiriya Upanishad* you will find: "*The parents should be worshipped as visible representatives of God on earth.*" Modern educated people do not pay any proper regard to their parents. If the father is uneducated and if the son is highly-educated, he will say that his father is a servant of the house when anybody puts the question: "Who is this old man?"

He must train his children in the proper manner. He must give them good education in Sanskrit, English and in technical subjects. He must train them in the path of spirituality from their very childhood. He must be devoted to his wife who is his partner in life. No religious rite is valid without her presence. He must regard her as a real helper in the path of spirituality. As soon as a son is born she becomes his mother. He must give up all ideas of relationship as wife as soon as a son is born. He must give up sexual intercourse. Both should lead a spiritual life. The husband should not regard his wife as a machine for procreation only.

There is some higher spiritual purpose.

Man must serve society according to his temperament, taste and capacity. This will help in the purification of his mind. He must serve as an honorary member, without any remuneration. He must develop the spirit of patriotism. He must serve the country. Service of the country is pure Mother-worship.

“Each man devoted to his own duty attains perfection. How he attains perfection while being engaged in his own duty, hear now.” (XVIII:45)

Your duty is your sole support and the highest service you can render to the Supreme is to carry it out whole-heartedly, without expectation of fruits, with the attitude of dedication to the Lord. This will surely lead you to the Supreme. All the impurities of the mind will be washed away by the performance of one's own duty and you will be fit for Self-knowledge.

“He from whom all the beings have evolved and by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him with his own duty, man attains perfection.” (XVIII:46)

The performance by a man of his own duty is simply carrying into effect the intention of the Supreme from Whom the whole of the creation emanates. When a man worships the Supreme Being with the flowers of his actions, then He is immensely pleased and being thus gratified by such worship He confers dispassion and discrimination on him.

Worship of the Lord through one's duties purifies the heart of the aspirant and prepares him for the devotion to knowledge which eventually leads him to the attainment of Self-realisation. Work ceaselessly for the Lord and surrender the fruits of all actions to Him. Take the Lord as your sole refuge. Live for Him. Work for Him. Serve Him in all forms. Think of Him only. Meditate on Him alone. See Him everywhere. Worship Him in your heart. Consecrate your life, all actions, feelings and thoughts

to the Lord. You will rest in Him. You will attain union with Him. You will attain immortal supreme peace and eternal bliss.

The right performance of the duties of any station in life without attachment will bring Self-realisation and liberation. The following anecdote of a pious woman and a butcher illustrate this:

A sannyasin retired into a forest to practise yoga. He remained in a cave for a period of twelve years. He practised pranayama, khechari mudra and various yoga kriyas. He developed some powers through these practices. One day he was sitting under the shade of a tree. A crane was perched upon one of the branches of the tree. It passed excreta on the head of the sannyasin. The sannyasin became enraged. He glared at the crane. Some yoga fire at once emanated from the crown of his head and burnt the crane to ashes immediately. The sannyasin rejoiced at the marvellous power he possessed.

He went into the city for procuring his usual alms. He called out “Narayana Hari” at the door of a householder. The lady of the house was engaged in nursing her sick husband. She was a very chaste woman who was very much devoted to her husband. She observed the rules of a chaste wife. She answered from within the room:

“O Bhikshu, kindly wait a bit.” The sannyasin was very much annoyed. He reflected: ‘Look at the arrogant nature of this lady. She has asked me to wait. She is not aware of my yoga powers.’

While he was thinking thus the lady said: “O Bhikshu! there is no crane here. Don't think too much of yourself. Do not be puffed up with your siddhis.”

The sannyasin stood in utter amazement. He had to wait quietly. At last the lady came outside with alms for him. The

sannyasin prostrated at her feet and asked: "O Devi, how did you manage to read my thoughts?"

The lady replied: "O Swamiji! I do not know anything of pranayama or any kind of yoga kriya. I made you wait because I was busy attending upon my sick husband. I am an ignorant woman. I am sincerely devoted to my husband. I regard him as my guru and God. I worship him. I don't go to temples. I do not repeat mantras. I serve my husband day and night. I obey his words implicitly. I massage his feet. I walk in the footsteps of Savitri, Nalayani and Anasuya. I sleep after he has slept. I get up in the morning before he arises. He is my all-in-all. Through such service, devotion and duty to my husband I have received illumination. I have a pure heart. I could read your thoughts. This is the secret of my practices. If you want to learn more, go to a butcher who sells meat in the big market. He will teach you something of absorbing interest and importance. You will be highly delighted indeed. You will be immensely benefited."

The sannyasin went straight to the town where the butcher was living. He came direct to the market and found the butcher chopping meat. The sannyasin thought within himself: 'O my Lord! Is this the man from whom I am going to learn something interesting and useful? He is the devil incarnate. He is a ruffian.'

The butcher read the thoughts of the sannyasin and said: "O Swamiji! Did that lady send you? Kindly take your seat here. I shall attend on you presently." He finished his business with customers and then asked the sannyasin to follow him to his house. He asked him to wait outside and went in and attended to his old father and mother. He gave them a bath, fed them nicely and put them to bed. He then came to the sannyasin and said: "O Swamiji, I am at thy feet now. Kindly order me any service".

The sannyasin asked him some questions on vedanta.

The butcher gave him beautiful, soul-stirring replies concerning the Atman, the nature of freedom, sadhana, the state of a jivanmukta, etc. The sannyasin was astonished. Many of his doubts were cleared. He was highly pleased with the butcher. He asked him: "How is it that you are doing this dirty work? How did you manage to get such exalted knowledge?"

The butcher replied: "Swamiji, you are mistaken. No duty or work is impure or degrading. Every work is worship of God. I do my duty well without any attachment or motive. I serve my parents day and night. They are my God on earth. I worship them daily. I do not know any yoga practice, I am not a learned man. I discharge my duties satisfactorily. This is my religion and this is my yoga. I obtained illumination, perfection, purity and freedom through the discharge of my duties as a householder and through the service of my parents. This is the secret of my yoga and Self-realisation."

If a man is endowed with religious inherent tendencies and if due to some obstacles he was not able to realise the summum bonum of life, he is again born in this world with good samskaras and in good environments with God's and guru's grace, and without entering the order of grihastha, he can enter into sannyas. There have been many such instances and even now there are such instances. Only when there are subtle desires does one have to enter into the household life. If one has discrimination, dispassion, six-fold wealth and intense yearning for liberation, he will never enter the householder's life but he will have double-promotion. He will at once take sannyas even while he is a brahmachari.

An ignorant worldly-minded man says: "I have to do my duties. I have to educate my four sons and three daughters. I have to please my employer. I have heavy duties in the office. I have to remit money to my widowed sister. I have a large family.

I have six brothers and five sisters. Where is the time for doing prayer and japa and the study of religious books? There is no time even to breathe. I have no leisure. Even during holidays I have to work. I bring office papers to my home and work at night till eleven. I do not want sannyasa or any yoga. The office work and the maintenance of my family is itself yoga."

Do you call this duty? It is mere slavery, it is bondage. The man is afraid of his superior at every moment. Even in his dreams he meets his office mates and the employer, and posts figures in the ledger. This is not sense of duty. The man cannot pray even for a second. There is not a single thought of God even in a month. He takes tea, eats food, sits at the table to write, sleeps and procreates. The entire life passes away like this. This is selfish work. This is not duty, this is work for gain and satisfaction of the lower appetite. Anything done under compulsion and expectation is not duty. You must not interpret slavery as duty. You must not take selfish works that are done through attachment, greed and passion as duty. You will be doing great injustice. This is self-created drudgery.

A clerk or an officer earns money by taking bribes, and when his conscience pricks him he feeds some brahmins and says: "I have done a great duty today. I have fed fifteen brahmins and given ten cents each". This is his idea of duty. He further adds: "Why should I take sannyasa and practise yoga? I will earn lots of money and do charity. This is the best kind of life." Poor deluded soul! May God give him good understanding!

The maxim 'Non injury is the highest virtue' cannot be strictly practised by householders. It can be practised by sannyasins who tread the path of renunciation. They will have to practise. If a vagabond enters the house and tries to molest a lady, a householder cannot keep quiet. He will not say: "I will not resist evil now." He will immediately take a club and give the

man a good thrashing. Suppose a lady is in danger. Someone wants to murder her to take away her jewels. She seeks the shelter of a young, strong man for protection. It is the duty of this young man to resist evil and defend her by attacking this cruel man. He cannot say now: "Non-injury is the highest virtue." It is his duty to save the life of the lady by resisting evil. Otherwise he fails in his duty.

There are special dharmas during critical and dangerous circumstances. They are called apta-dharma. Rishi Visvamitra took forbidden meat from an outcaste when there was severe famine and offered this in his sacrifice to the gods.

Morality and duty vary according to circumstances. To resist evil becomes the duty of a man in certain circumstances. The king should always raise his rod of chastisement to keep peace and order in his country. He cannot say: "I will not resist evil." He will fail in the discharge of his duty if he does not punish the wicked, and his country will be in a state of utter chaos. To hang a murderer or a dacoit is nonviolence for a king. Violence and non-violence are relative terms. To kill a man who is taking away the lives of many is non-violence.

To shoot a dog or a horse that is suffering from acute agony that cannot be alleviated, is non-violence for a European. He wants to free the dog from pain. His motive is good. However a sannyasin should not defend himself even when his life is in danger. A sannyasin is one who has no body and who identifies himself with the Atman.

Lord Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "*Better one's own duty, though destitute of merits, than the well-executed duty of another. He who does the duty laid down by his own nature does not incur sin. Congenital duty, O son of Kunti, though defective, ought not to be abandoned. All undertakings, indeed, are clouded by defects as fire by*

smoke" (XVIII:47,48)

Then again He says: "*Abandoning all duties, come to Me alone for shelter: Sorrow not, I will liberate thee from all sins.*" (XVIII:66)

In the previous two verses He asks Arjuna to abandon all duties. Is this contradiction? Is the Lord blowing hot and cold with the same breath? No. This is not contradiction. Arjuna says to the Lord: "*My heart is weighted down with the voice of faintness; my mind is confused as to duty. I ask Thee which may be better — that tell me decisively. I am Thy disciple, suppliant to Thee; teach me*" (11:7)

Lord Krishna gives the reply in Verse 66 of Chapter XVIII: "*Abandoning all duties take refuge in Me alone: I will liberate thee from all sins; grieve not.*" This passage means that Arjuna is to avoid the tangle of these duties and take refuge in the Supreme. In other words, whatever actions one has to perform, according to one's disposition and innate tendency, he may do, taking refuge in the Supreme. Krishna gives a command to Arjuna, an assurance and a consolation. This is the most important verse in the *Bhagavad Gita*. If one can live in the spirit of this verse alone, he can have highest bliss.

Morality and duty are relative terms. They are changing according to the state of life, stage of mental growth and evolution of the individual, time and circumstances, and the country in which one lives. To eat meat in Kashmir is perfectly moral for a Bengali brahmin. In the eyes of a Madrasi brahmin this is highly immoral. To have four wives (polygamy) is perfectly moral for a Muslim or a Chinaman, but for a Hindu this is highly immoral. A gentleman or lady can have divorce very easily in the West. Marriage is a contract in the West, whereas in India it is a sacrament or holy act that is done before the sacred fire. Divorce is quite moral in the West, but it is highly immoral in the East. For an Arya Samajist

widow-marriage is quite moral; for a Sanatanist it is highly immoral. Poliandry (one woman marrying several husbands, the opposite of polygamy) is quite moral in Tibet, but it is highly immoral in the eyes of people of other countries. It is perfectly moral for a Sikh to drink, but it is immoral for him to smoke. People of cold countries require meat and a little liquor to keep up heat and help digestion. A soldier needs meat to keep up his strength and martial spirit. A brahmin or a sannyasin wants vegetable food, milk and fruits to help his meditation and keep up his sattvic mental attitude. Ignorant people hate others when they see them doing something that they themselves are not doing. A Madrasi vegetarian brahmin hates a fish-eating Bengali brahmin. This is a sad mistake. This retards his spiritual progress. A Madrasi is horrified when he sees a Hindustani eating with both his hands from the same plate as his children.

Similarly the idea of duty also varies among people of different countries. An African Negro cannot perform a fire ceremony in his hot country in summer. A Kashmiri pundit cannot take morning bath in winter in his place. The duty of one class of people cannot be the duty of another class of people. The duty of a man of one stage of life cannot be the duty of a man of another stage. The duties of a brahmin, vaishya, kshatriya and sudra, the duties of a brahmachari, householder, forest-dweller and a sannyasin, are quite different. A Brahmin cannot do the duty of a soldier. To kill an enemy is the duty of a soldier or kshatriya. To practise non-violence in thought, word and deed is the duty of a sannyasin and brahmin. Man evolves quickly by performing rigidly his duties allotted to his station in life.

Children of immortality! Shake off all weaknesses. Stand up and gird your loins. Do your duty satisfactorily in accordance with your caste or stage of life. Evolve quickly in spirituality. Eternal bliss, supreme peace, infinite knowledge and satisfaction

can be had in God only. Practice of duty will surely lead to the attainment of God-consciousness. There is no happiness in finite objects. The Infinite alone is bliss. Understand the Truth through the practice of your duty. This world is unreal. It is like a mirage. The senses and mind deceive you at every moment. Wake up! Open your eyes and learn to discriminate. Do not trust your senses. They are your enemies. It is very difficult to get this human birth. Life is short, time is fleeting. Those who cling to unreal things of this world are verily committing suicide. Struggle hard to practise your duty. Keep the ideal before your eyes always. Have a programme of life. Attempt to realise the ideal with leech-like tenacity and attain success. Practise and realise the state of sat-chid-ananda right now in this very second. May the blessings of the Lord be upon you all! May joy, bliss, immortality, peace and poise abide with you for ever!

PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT AND WRONG

Right and wrong, dharma and adharma, are both relative terms. It is very difficult to define these terms precisely. Even sages are bewildered sometimes in finding out what is right and what is wrong in some special circumstances. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita*: “*What is action, what is inaction ? Even the wise are herein perplexed. Therefore I shall teach thee such action by knowing which thou shalt be liberated from evil. For, verily, the true nature of action should be known, as also of forbidden action, and of inaction- hard it is to understand the course of action. He who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, he is wise among men. He is harmonious, even while performing all actions*” (IV:16, 17, 18)

I shall try to explain the terms ‘right’ and ‘wrong’. Rishi Kanada, the author of Vaisesika philosophy says in the opening sutra: “*That which brings supreme bliss and exaltation is*

dharma. That which elevates you and brings you nearer to God is right. That which takes you down and away from God is wrong. That which is done in strict accordance with the injunctions of the scriptures is right, and that which is done against the injunctions of the scriptures is wrong.” This is one way of defining these terms. To work in accordance with the Divine Will is right; to work in opposition to the Divine Will is wrong.

It is very difficult to find out by the man in the street what exactly the Divine Will is in certain actions. That is the reason why wise sages declare that people should resort to scriptures, learned pandits and realised persons for consultation. A pure man who has done nishkama karma yoga for several years and who has done worship of God for a long time can readily find out the Divine Will when he wants to do certain actions. He can hear the inner shrill, small voice. Ordinary people should not attempt to hear this Divine Voice, the voice of God — they may mistake the voice of the impure mind for the voice of God. The lower instinctive mind will delude them.

Some people say: “We can find out good and evil, right and wrong, by consulting our conscience only.” No individual will be able to do this by consulting his conscience only. It may give some clue and help. Conscience is not an infallible guide. The conscience of a man changes according to his experiences and education. Conscience is one’s own intellectual conviction. The conscience of the individual speaks in accordance with his tendencies, habits, passions, inclinations, capacity and education. The conscience of a savage speaks a language entirely different from that of a civilised European. The conscience of an African negro speaks a language entirely different from that of an ethically developed yogi of India. Ask a clerk in the collectorate: “What are your duties?” He will say: “I must earn money to support my

family and parents. I must not injure others. I must read Ramayana." He has no idea of the laws of Nature. He will submit himself blindly to the laws whatever they may be. If you ask: "What are your duties to the country and humanity? What is right and wrong? What is good and evil?" he will simply blink. Ask any taxi driver: "What is your duty?" He will say: 'Anyhow, I must earn Rs. 20 daily. I have to purchase ten gallons of petrol, tyres, tubes and crude oil. The tyres are very costly. I have six daughters and five sons. I must protect them.' If you ask him anything about God, virtues, liberation, bondage and freedom, right and wrong, he will be bewildered. Why is there so much divergence between the promptings of conscience of two persons of the same caste, religion or creed? Why do we find ten different convictions among ten persons of the same district and same community? The voice of conscience alone is not sufficient to guide man in understanding of the laws of God, right and wrong, good and evil and other duties of life. The scriptures and realised persons only can truly guide a man in the discharge of his duties in an efficient manner. That is the reason why Lord Krishna emphatically declares: *"He who, having cast aside the ordinances of the scriptures, follows the promptings of desire, attains not to perfection, nor happiness, nor the highest goal. Therefore let the scriptures be thy authority in determining what ought to be done, or what ought not to be done. Knowing what has been declared by the ordinances of the scriptures, thou ought to work in this world"* (XVI:23,24)

If you say: "Scriptures are countless. They are like the ocean. I can hardly understand the truths that are inculcated there. I cannot fathom out and gauge their depths. There are contradictions, I am puzzled and bewildered," then strictly follow the words of a guru in whom you can place absolute faith and confidence. If there is fear, shame, doubt, pricking of the

conscience and uneasiness of mind, know that you are doing wrong. If there is joy, exhilaration and satisfaction, understand that you are doing a right action.

That work which gives elevation, joy and peace to the mind is right; that which brings depression, pain and restlessness to the mind is wrong. This is an easy way to find out right and wrong. Selfishness clouds understanding. Therefore if a man has even a tinge of selfishness he cannot detect what is right and wrong. A very pure, subtle, sharp intellect is needed for this purpose. The *Bhagavad Gita* describes the nature of sattvic, rajasic and tamasic natures in chapter eighteen as follows:

"That which knows the path of work and renunciation, what ought to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation — that intellect is sattvic (pure), O Arjuna. That by which one wrongly understands dharma and adharma and also what ought to be done and what ought not to be done — that intellect, O Arjuna, is rajasic. That which, enveloped in darkness, sees dharma as adharma and all things perverted — that intellect is tamasic." (XVIII:30,31,32)

Various other definitions are given by wise men to help the students in the path of righteousness. In the Bible it is said: "*Do unto others as you would be done by.*" This is a very good maxim. The whole gist of right conduct is found here. If one practises this very carefully he will not commit any wrong act. Non-injury (ahimsa) is the highest virtue. If one is well established in ahimsa in thought, word and deed, he can never do any wrong action. That is the reason why Patanjali Maharishi has given ahimsa great prominence in his raja yoga philosophy. Ahimsa comes first in the practice of yama or self-restraint. To give pleasure to others is right; to spread misery and pain to others is wrong. One can follow this in his daily conduct towards

others and can evolve in the spiritual path.

Do not perform any act that brings shame and fear. *You* will be quite safe if you follow this rule. Stick to any rule that appeals to your reason and conscience and follow it with faith and attention. You will evolve and reach the abode of eternal bliss.

The beginning of ethics is to reflect upon ourselves, our surroundings and our actions. Before we act we must stop to think. When a man earnestly attends to what he recognises as his duties, he will progress and in consequence thereof his comfort and prosperity will increase. His pleasures will be more refined, his happiness, his enjoyments and his recreations will be better and nobler. Happiness is like a shadow; if pursued it will flee from us, but if a man does not trouble himself about it and strictly attends to his duties, pleasures of the best and noblest kind will crop up everywhere in his path. If he does not anxiously pursue it, happiness will follow him.

THE THREE GUNAS (ATTRIBUTES OF NATURE)

A clear understanding of the three gunas and their operations is very necessary for a karma yogi. He who has knowledge of these can do his work in a better and more efficient manner.

Nature is composed of the three gunas or forces; namely, sattva, rajas and tamas. Sattva is harmony, light, wisdom, equilibrium or goodness. Rajas is passion, motion or activity. Tamas is inertia, inaction or darkness. These three qualities bring bondage to the jiva (individual soul). Though sattva is a desirable quality, yet it also binds a man. It is a golden fetter. Rajas is the source of attachment and thirst for life. It causes attachment to action. Tamas binds man to heedlessness, laziness and sleep.

These three qualities are inseparable. No one is absolutely rajasic or sattvic or tamasic. Sometimes sattva prevails in man.

He is calm and serene. He sits quietly and entertains sublime, soul-elevating thoughts. He studies religious scriptures. He talks on divine topics. When sattva prevails the other two qualities are overpowered for the time being. At other times rajas prevails. He does some action. He moves about. He plans, schemes, speculates. He craves for power, wealth and activity. When rajas prevails, sattva and tamas are overpowered for the time being. Sometimes tamas prevails and the man becomes slothful. He feels lazy, indolent and lethargic. He is dull and feels sleepy. When tamas prevails, sattva and rajas are overpowered for the time being.

In some people sattva is predominant; in others rajas is predominant; and in some others tamas is predominant. When one is peaceful and wise, then it may be known that sattva is increasing. Greed, outgoing energy, undertaking of action, restlessness and desire —these are born of the increase of rajas. Darkness, delusion, stagnation, dullness, heedlessness —these are born of the increase of inertia.

If sattva is predominant at the time of one's death, then he goes to the spotless world of sages. If rajas is predominant at the time of one's death, he will doubtless be born among those that are attached to action. If one dies when tamas is predominant, he will be born in the womb of the senseless.

Those who are established in sattva rise upwards. The rajasic people occupy a middle place and the tamasic people go downwards, shrouded in the vilest of qualities.

Intense rajas can take a sattvic turn. A man who is immersed in deep rajas can take to the path of renunciation. He will, as is the law, be fed-up with activities. In the *Bhagavad Gita* you will find: “*For a sage who is seeking yoga, action is called the means; for the same sage when enthroned in yoga, serenity is called the means.*” (VI:3).

It is impossible to rise or jump to sattva all of a sudden from tamas. One should convert tamas into full rajas first, then one can reach sattva. Sattva is intense activity. Just as the wheel of an engine appears to remain stationary when it moves very swiftly, so also a sattvic man appears to be calm through his self-restraint or control. A sattvic man is most active. He can turn out tremendous work within the twinkling of an eye. He has full concentration.

Do not mistake rajasic restlessness or movements for karma yoga or divine activity. People may say that they are doing selfless service to the world, but if you analyse their motives there will be the taint of personal desire in some form or other. Many persons cannot sit quiet even for a moment. They think that moving about here and there or doing some action or other is to be full of life. The yogi or sage who sits still by calming the mind, who does nothing at all physically, is the most active man in the whole world; whereas the man who runs here and there and who is always very busy does nothing at all. This may be paradoxical to you. Very few can comprehend the truth of this statement. Sattva is intense activity. A wheel that revolves very rapidly appears to be at rest. So is sattva. So is a sattvic man.

Tamas is that binding force with a tendency to lethargy, sloth and foolish actions. It causes delusion or non-discrimination. It binds him who associates the Self with the body. A tamasic man acts under the compulsion of the wants of the body. He has no power of judgment. Troubled by the wants of the body he acts under pressure to keep himself alive. His actions are not guided by reason. They are on the plane of instinct. His senses are dull. He becomes infatuated and stupefied. He has no inclination to work. He yawns much. He sleeps too much. He always wants to sleep. He never knows when and how to act, what, to whom and how to talk. He does not know how to

behave or how to address others. He takes delight in following the wrong path. He is thoughtless and ignorant. He forgets everything. He is negligent and indolent.

The fruit of good action, they say, is sattvic and pure; verily the fruit of rajas is pain, and ignorance is the fruit of tamas. The fruit of good action is both happiness and knowledge. The fruit of rajasic actions is bitter. Rajasic action brings pain, disappointment and dissatisfaction. Rajasic activity leads to greed. When the rajasic man tries to gratify his original desires, new desires crop up. This opens the door to greed. In tamasic action there is no knowledge within and no foresight, therefore there is unrighteousness.

The Atman or Brahman is beyond the three gunas. One should increase his sattva guna by development of virtuous qualities, by taking sattvic food, doing charity, practising austerities, doing japa and meditation, controlling the senses, and studying religious books. Then he should go beyond sattva guna also by identifying himself with the Atman or witness, and practising deep meditation.

When the dweller in the body has crossed these three qualities from which all bodies have been produced, then, liberated from birth, death, old age, diseases and sorrow, he drinks the nectar of immortality.

He who has crossed the three qualities has the following signs as described in the *Bhagavad Gita*: “*He who does not hate radiance nor activity nor even delusion, when present, nor longs for them when absent; he who, seated like one unconcerned is unshaken by the qualities; and he who, knowing that the qualities are active, is centred in the self and moves not. Balanced in pleasure and pain, self-reliant, to whom a lump of earth, a rock and gold are alike; the same to loved and unloved, firm, the same in censure and praise, the same in honour and ignominy, the same to friend*

and foe, abandoning all undertakings — he is said to have crossed over the qualities. And he who serves Me with unswerving devotion, he, crossing beyond qualities, is fit for becoming Brahman” (XIV:22-26).

KARMA INDRIYAS (ORGANS OF ACTION)

A karma yogi should have a detailed knowledge of the nature and workings of the karma indriyas (the organs of action) — the feet, the hands and the organs of speech, generation and excretion are the five organs of action. The real indriyas are in the astral body. They are very subtle. They have corresponding centres or counterparts in the brain (nerve centres). They are moved by prana. Without the prana they cannot move even a fraction of an inch. The karma indriyas are located in the vital sheath of the astral body. What you see outside — mouth, hands, feet, organ of reproduction and anus are mere external instruments.

The karma indriyas are the five soldiers. The commander-in-chief is the mind. The mind extracts work from these soldiers when it desires to get sensual objects for its gratification. Mind also works in unison with these five organs. Mind is the leader or big dacoit. These five organs are his assistants. They execute the commands of their leader immediately. They cannot work independently without the healthy and willing-co-operation of the mind. It is the mind that really works through these organs. It is the mind that really plans, schemes and suggests in all activities. During sleep these indriyas temporarily get involution in the mind. During samadhi or the superconscious state they are absorbed in the mind.

The individual soul is a constant companion of the mind. It is he who reaps the fruits of actions, pleasure or pain.

You will find in the *Bhagavad Gita*: “*These five causes, O mighty-armed, learn of Me as declared in the sankhya*

system, for the accomplishment of all actions. The body, the actor, the various organs, the diverse kinds of energies and the presiding deities, also, the fifth — whatever action a man performs by his body, mind and speech, whether right or the reverse, these five are the cause thereof.”

“*That being so, he verily who owing to untrained reason looked on his Self, which is isolated, as the actor, he of perverted intelligence sees not.” (XVIII: 16).*

You will find again in the *Bhagavad Gita*: “*Knowledge, the knowable and the knower form the threefold impulse to action; the organ, the action and the actor form the threefold constituents of action.” (XVIII: 18)*

At first the individual soul has knowledge of the objects. Then a desire arises in the mind to possess the objects for his enjoyment. Then he exerts to obtain these objects. Desire is the motivating force that moves the mind to action. Man thinks of the object of the senses. Then he develops attachment to them. From attachment there springs desire. Thought is the fuel, desire is the fire. If you can stop the thoughts, the fire of desire will be extinguished by itself, just as a lamp is extinguished when the supply of ghee or oil is withdrawn.

There is at first attraction for objects. Then comes attachment. Even if the attraction dies, the longing or hankering for the object will continue to remain. This is the thread of hankering. Then there is the preference for objects. This is still more difficult to be eradicated. The organs of action must be controlled. The thoughts should also be controlled. The mind should be firmly fixed on the Lord. Only then will you become a true yogi. Only then will you attain to Self-realisation. Destroy attachment first. Then the longing and preference will slowly die.

There are three kinds of impulses — the impulse of thinking, the impulse of speech and the impulse of action. A karma

yogi should not be impulsive. He must not be carried away by emotions. He must calm the surging, bubbling emotions and the impulses, and purify them. Then he can turn out real solid work. He must destroy all unnecessary, useless or vain thoughts. This will add to his reserve energy, this will conserve his energy. Energy is wasted in useless thinking.

Energy is also wasted in idle talking and worldly gossiping. A karma yogi should observe silence (mauna) for two hours daily and for six hours on Sundays and holidays. Mauna will destroy impulses of speech. He who observes mauna can use measured words during speaking. He can control anger and falsehood. He will be peaceful, he will have a strong will. There are people who talk like a machine at a tremendous speed, without a full-stop. The greatest punishment for such people is to put them in silence for three days. They will be in a great fix. He who talks much thinks little and does little. He is a very restless man. The organ of speech brings great distraction of mind. Control of speech really means the control of the mind. There is a sharp sword in the tongue. One harsh word or a mild rebuke breaks a long-standing friendship and results in fighting and actual bloodshed. The restlessness of the world is due to too much talking, gossiping, back-biting and scandal-mongering. Ladies are more talkative. They disturb the peaceful atmosphere of their homes. If all people of the world practise mauna for two hours daily this will undoubtedly contribute to the peace of the world to a considerable degree.

SELF-DELUSION

Mere physical control of the organs of action will not do. You must not think of the objects of the senses. If as you observe fasting during Ekadasi days to propitiate Lord Hari your mind constantly thinks of various kinds of delicious food, you will not get the benefits of fasting. You will be regarded as a

self-deluded man or hypocrite. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

“He who sits controlling the organs of actions, but dwelling in his mind on the objects of the senses, that bewildered man is called a hypocrite” (III:6).

The actions of the mind are the real actions. Thought is the real action. You must utilise the energy that is conserved by the control of organs for higher purposes at the altar of God. This will constitute yoga. That passionate man who visits his legal wife frequently is more immoral than the man who occasionally goes to the house of ill-fame. That man who constantly dwells on sexual thoughts is highly immoral even though he observes physical brahmacharya by controlling the body. He is the worst man. It is thought that sways the body. Lord Krishna says to Arjuna: *“But he who, controlling the senses (of knowledge) by the mind, O Arjuna, with the organs of action, without attachment, performs yoga by action, he is worthy.” (III:7)*

Then the Lord praises action and further adds that one cannot keep up even his health if he remains inactive. So he says: *“Perform then, right action, for action is superior to inaction, and even the very maintenance of the body would not be possible by inaction” (III:8).*

It is also wrong to think that actions lead to bondage, and that they should not, therefore, be performed. Karma yoga is performance of action with understanding or poised reason that is not affected by loss or gain, success or failure. Lord Krishna gives valuable direction to Arjuna in the performance of action. He says: *“Unattached thou perform action.” (III:9).* This is the secret of karma yoga.

THE PSEUDO KARMA YOGI

A man may put on homespun clothes and don a homespun

cap, but may not have any of the qualifications or attributes of the man who has introduced homespun cloth and may not even follow his instructions. He may not have the least tinge of self-sacrifice. He may do a little charity and feed some poor people just for the sake of name and fame, and even himself write to the papers about his charitable act in the name of a correspondent. He may donate a small sum to a public cause and eagerly watch in the newspapers to see whether his name is published or not. He will be restless till he sees his name in the papers. Such a man is called a pseudo-karma yogi. The world abounds now in such sort of karma yogis.

A landlord or a money-lender sucks the blood of poor peasants and builds a palace. He gives a donation of several thousands of pounds to a Hindu university out of his reserve fund of a hundred thousand. He builds a temple for a few thousands and puts his name on the marble slab in front of the temple in bold letters. This is not karma yoga. This is pompous advertisement for acquiring name and fame.

On the other hand an ordinary labourer who earns a few shillings by the sweat of his brow may offer his money in charity by feeding a few starving or sick people, and may himself starve on that day. This is real self-sacrifice. This is real karma yoga.

In olden days, Madura in South India was ruled by Pandian kings. One of the Pandian kings spent two lacs of rupees in doing utsava of Lord Soma Sundareshwar in a certain year. He had a great deal of ego. He thought within himself: "I am a great devotee of Lord Siva. I have spent a large sum of money in the worship of the Lord. Thousands of brahmins, sadhus and the poor have been fed. I have given rich presents to brahmin pandits. There is no king who is so pious as myself." Lord Siva appeared in his dream that night and said: "O king! Do not be proud of your piety, devotion and charity. I am not pleased with you in

any way. Wherever there is pride, there cannot be any real devotion and holiness. Just go and see my humble devotee, the wood-cutter, who lives in a small hut on the banks of the Vaighai, and who offers to Me a little kheer made of broken rice and a little black sugar on Mondays. Learn from him what real devotion is." The king was greatly vexed. The next morning he proceeded to see the woodcutter in his hut. He asked the wood-cutter: "How do you worship Lord Siva?" The man replied in a meek voice: "O king! I earn two annas a day. I spend one anna for my food, distribute nine pice in charity and save three pice daily. Every Monday I prepare a little kheer with some broken rice and black sugar and offer it to Lord Siva. Whenever I cut wood, I always repeat 'Siva, Siva, Siva'. I always remember Him. This is my devotion to the Lord. I do not know anything else."

The king was very much pleased with the humility, simplicity, loving nature, devotion and purity of the wood-cutter. He erected a small building for him and made arrangements for his food till the end of his life. He learnt many practical lessons from the woodcutter's life and in turn became a real, humble devotee of Lord Siva. He destroyed his pride, vanity and egoism.

Lord Jesus says: "Your left hand should not know what the right hand does. Be meek when you serve. Die unknown. Let nobody know your name. But work and serve others. Do not expect approbation and applause. Then only real fragrance of your soul will come out."

Dear friends who tread the path of karma yoga! Be sincere at heart. Do not run after the shadowy toys of name and fame. Name and fame are illusory. They are mere vibrations in the air. Nobody can earn an everlasting name in this world. Does anybody remember Sri Vyasa, Vasishtha, Vikramaditya, Yajnavalkya, Vama Dev and Jada Bharat now? Many great souls have come and gone. At the present time the names of one or

two political leaders are remembered. After a few years their names also will disappear. Treat name and fame as offal, poison or vomited matter. This world is unreal. Care not for little perishable things. Care for the everlasting Reality only. Do constant selfless service silently with thoughts of God and realise the indwelling presence. Become a true karma yogi.

2. ADVICE TO CHILDREN

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

God created you, your brother, sister, father, mother, friend and your relatives. He created the sun, moon and the stars. He created the animals and the birds. He created the mountains, rivers and trees. He created the whole world.

He dwells in your heart. He is everywhere. He is all-pervading. He is all-knowing. He is all-powerful. He is all-merciful. He is all-loving. He is all-blissful. Your body is the moving temple of God. Keep the body pure, strong and healthy.

God is Love. God is Truth. God is Peace. God is Bliss. God is Light. God is Power. God is Knowledge. Realise Him and be free.

Do Kirtan daily morning and night. Pray daily. Offer flowers to Him. Prostrate before Him. Offer sweetmeats to Him and then eat. Place light before Him. Burn camphor before Him. Do Arati. Put gar land on Him. Pray to Him daily. He will give you everything.

Keep a picture of God in your room. Worship Him daily. All your desires will be fulfilled.

Offer this morning prayer to God, everyday:

“O Lord of this world! Prostrations unto Thee! Thou art my Guru, real Mother, real Friend and real Guide. Protect me. I am Thine. All is Thine. Thy Will be done.”

“O Adorable God! Salutations unto Thee. Give me pure intellect. Make me pure. Give me light, strength, health and long life. Make me a good Brahmachari.”

“O Almighty Lord! Remove all my evil qualities. Make me virtuous. Make me a patriot. Let me love my mother-country.”

Before you retire to bed at night, offer this prayer to God:

“O Sweet God! Forgive my sins and wrong actions. I thank You for all Your gifts. You are very kind to me. Let me remember You always.”

“Make me dutiful. Give me success in my examination; Make me a good, brilliant boy. (Make me a good, brilliant girl.) Adorations unto Thee.”

“Give me good memory. Let me love all. Let me serve all. Let me see You in all. Make me prosperous. Protect me, my father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, brothers and sisters. Glory unto Thee!”

Dear Govinda! Do not fight with your brother, sister or classmates. Obey your parents and teachers. Do not smoke. This is a bad habit. You will get disease from smoking. Give up bad company.

Do not use vulgar words. Do not abuse anybody. Be kind to all. Serve all. Love all. Respect elders. Do not steal anything. Do not hurt anybody. Speak gently. Speak sweetly. Be punctual in your school.

Study your daily lessons well. Stand first in the class. Do not play much. Do not kill bugs and scorpions. Do not waste time.

Don’t play cards. Playing cards will make you a wicked boy. Do not go to cinema. But do go to the temple daily and worship the Lord. Take flowers, camphor and fruits when you go to the temple.

Don’t hate anybody, but do love all. Give a pie to a blind man. Wash the clothes of your parents. Never become angry towards your parents and others. Anger is very bad. It will spoil your health. You will spoil your name. You will do wrong actions if you become angry.

God watches your thoughts. Don’t hide your thoughts. Be frank. Be pure in your thoughts, words and actions.

Worship Lord Surya, the Sun-God, on Sundays. Repeat ‘*Om Mitraya Namah*’, ‘*Om Suryaya Namah*’, ‘*Om Adityaya Namah*’. Lord Surya will give you good health and vigour and good eyesight.

Worship Lord Siva on Mondays. Worship Devi on Tuesdays and Fridays. Worship Guru on Thursdays. Worship Hanuman on Saturdays. You will get plenty, peace, prosperity and success!

Lord Brahma is the creator of this world. Sarasvati, Goddess of learning, is His Sakti or energy or wife. Lord Vishnu is the preserver of this world. Goddess Lakshmi is His Sakti, energy or wife. She is the Goddess of wealth. Lord Siva is the destroyer of this world. Uma or Parvati is His Sakti, energy or wife. Lord Ganesa is His eldest son. Lord Subrahmanya is His second son!

Lord Ganesa removes all obstacles. Lord Subrahmanya gives all success and strength. Worship them with faith and devotion. You will get *Bhakti* (devotion), *Bhukti* (happiness) and *Mukti* (liberation).

God loves you. He gives you many good things. He gives you food to eat and clothes to wear. He has given you ears to hear, eyes to see, a nose to smell, tongue to taste, hands to feel and work, and legs to walk.

You cannot see God with your fleshy eyes but He sees you. He takes care of you. He knows all that you do.

He is very kind to you. Love Him. Praise Him. Sing His Name and glory. Pray to Him to keep you away from all sins. He will be pleased with you. He will bless you.

O David! Look at the rose! How beautiful it is! What a

fine fragrance it has. You love it. You pluck it and smell it. Can a scientist produce a rose? You can make a paper-flower which may look beautiful but it has no sweet smell.

The rose soon fades and loses its beauty and fragrance. You throw it away. It is perishable. Its beauty lasts for a few minutes. Who has created the beautiful flower? This Creator is God. He is Beauty of beauties. He is everlasting Beauty. Attain Him. You also will possess eternal beauty. Beauty is God. Always discriminate between the real and the unreal.

There is only one God. But His names and aspects are endless. Call Him by any name and worship Him in any aspect that pleases you. You are sure to see Him and get His grace and blessings.

Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are the three Forms of the one God of the Hindus. Allah is the God of Muslims. Jehovah is the God of the Jews. The Father in Heaven is the God of Christians. Ahura Mazda is the God of the Zoroastrians.

God is the Aim of all religions. Every religion points out the way to attain God, God is the central topic of every religion.

Do not fight with your Christian friends. Do not fight with your Muslim friends or Parsee friends. Their religions also lead them to God just as your religion does. You can reach the same destination by travelling through any of the paths leading to it. "All paths lead to God." Bear this in mind.

Purity, charity, control of the senses, penance, truthfulness, absence of hatred and pride will help you to attain God.

3. ADVICE TO BRAHMACHARIS (SWAMI SIVANANDA)

Brahmacharya means celibacy. A Brahmachari is one who is a celibate, one who observes chastity or celibacy. The term

'Celibacy' is from the Latin word 'Caelebs', which means 'unmarried' or 'single' and signifies the state of living unmarried. It means control of not only the reproductive Indriya but also control of all senses; it means purity in thought, word and actions.

The life of a Brahmachari begins with the *Upanayana* ceremony, the investiture of the sacred thread, his second birth. The Brahmachari should direct his entire attention solely to study and acquiring of such knowledge as would enable him to become a worthy member of society. During this period of study let him live either with his parents or at the place of his study under the supervision of teachers. He should not live by himself, with friends and acquaintances, nor with relatives.

A Brahmachari is one who is attempting to realise Brahman by his conducting a life of absolute celibacy. Brahmacharya is the conduct of leading a celibate life. A Brahmachari should study religious books till he reaches the age of twenty-five. If he has taken the vow of celibacy till the end of life, if he wants to become a Naishnika Brahmachari, he need not enter the stage of householder. He should have real lasting Vairagya and Viveka. Then only he will be really benefited. He can devote his whole life to spiritual pursuits.

A Brahmachari should worship his Guru, worship cows and gods with due reverence. Guru is the embodiment of all Vedas and all Devas. Therefore God and Guru should be taken as one and he should worship his Guru daily. He should serve his Guru with faith and devotion for complete twelve years.

The Brahmachari should have Japa as his highest possession. He should never leave Japa. Through Japa alone the Brahmachari attains success, no matter whether he performs any other Vedic sacrifice or not. Through the contact of his senses with their objects of gratification, he undoubtedly acquires sin. Hence, by controlling them, he achieves success. Control of the senses is possible for the Brahmachari only through Japa.

Brahmacharis should do their *Sandhya Vandana* daily at the proper time, — morning, noon and evening. ‘Sandhya’ is the point of junction of two periods of time. There is a special manifestation of force or purity at Sandhyas. The student will derive immense benefit by doing prayers at this particular meeting point of two periods of time. *Arghya* with repetition of the *Gayatri* should be given to the sun at the proper time. You will have wonderful health, vigour and vitality and a pure, sharp intellect. At the present moment students have entirely neglected their *Sandhyas*. Their minds have been charged with materialistic poison. They have become slayers of Atman. “Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die” has become their philosophy! Poor, self-deluded souls! How long will you continue this state of affairs ? Do not kill the soul within. Awake, arise and purify yourself. Do *Sandhya*. Understand and realise its potency and efficacy. Do some form of worship or other and realise the splendours of the Atman. Regain your lost divinity.

A true Brahmachari only can cultivate *Bhakti*. A ‘true Brahmachari alone can practise *Yoga*. A true Brahmachari only can acquire *Jnana*. Without Brahmacharya no spiritual progress or success in worldly affairs is possible.

Brahmacharis should entirely give up betel-chewing, cigarettes, tobacco, snuff, tea, coffee, etc. Tobacco produces nicotine poisoning, tobacco-heart (irritable heart), nervous diseases and tobacco-amblyopia (eye disease).

O bold Brahmachari, practice of Brahmacharya gives good health, inner peace, strength, peace of mind and long life. It invigorates the mind and nerves. It helps to conserve physical and mental energy. It augments strength, vigour and vitality. It gives power to face the difficulties in the daily battle of life. It is the master key for opening the realm of health and happiness. It is the corner stone of bliss and unalloyed felicity. It is the only

specific that keeps up true manliness. Therefore keep up Brahmacharya by all means. Brahmacharya is freedom from sexual thoughts and desires. Preserve the vital fluid. It is the life-force in you. You will enjoy supreme bliss. A perfect Brahmachari can move the world, can command the five elements, like Sant Jnana Deva.

Brahmacharya is the basis for acquiring immortality. Brahmacharya brings material progress and psychic advancement. It is the substratum for a life of peace in the Atman. It is a potent weapon for waging war against the internal Asuras, viz., *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*, etc. It contributes perennial joy, uninterrupted and undecaying bliss. It gives tremendous energy, clear brain, gigantic will-power, bold understanding, retentive memory and good *Vichara Sakti*. Through Brahmacharya and Brahmacharya alone you can get physical, mental and spiritual advancement in life.

The vital energy, the *Virya*, supports your life. It is the *Prana* of *Pranas* which shines in your sparkling eyes, which beams in your blooming cheeks. It is a great treasure for you. It is the quintessence of blood. One drop of semen is manufactured out of forty drops of blood. Mark here how valuable this fluid is!

Brahmacharya or spotless chastity is the best of all panaceas. One who has perfect control over the sexual energy attains powers unobtainable by any other means. The door to Nirvana or perfection is complete Brahmacharya. Complete celibacy is the masterkey to open the realms of elysian bliss. The avenue to the abode of supreme peace begins from Brahmacharya or purity. *Ojas* is spiritual energy that is stored up in the brain. By sublime thoughts, meditation, *Japa*, worship and *Pranayama*, sexual energy can be transmuted into *Ojas Sakti* and stored up in the brain. This energy can be utilised for divine contemplation and spiritual pursuits.

That man in whom the sex-idea is deep-rooted can never dream of understanding Vedanta and realising Brahman even in one hundred crores of births. Sexual Vasanas (subtle desires) are more powerful than other Vasanas. Therefore you will have to direct all your efforts to subduing the sexual Vasanas. Narada says in his Bhakti Sutras: "These (sexual) propensities, though they at first are like ripples, acquire the proportions of a sea, on account of bad company." (Sutra 45). Therefore avoid evil company at all costs.

What is the state of your mind, when you attend a ball-room dance or nautch party, or when you read the 'Mysteries of the Court of London'? What is the state of your mind when you attend the Satsanga party of a realised sage at Banares on the banks of the Ganga, or when you study the soul-elevating classical Upa-nishads? Compare and contrast your mental states. Remember, friend, that there is nothing so utterly ruinous to the soul as evil company. One should not talk even of stories of women, the luxurious ways of rich persons, rich foods, vehicles, politics, silken clothing, flowers, scents, etc. Because the mind gets easily excited; it will begin to imitate the ways of luxurious persons. Desires will crop up. Attachment also will come in.

Obscene pictures, vulgar words, novels which deal with love stories, excite passion and produce ignoble, mean, undesirable sentiments in the heart. Whereas, the sight of a good picture of Lord Krishna or Lord Rama or Lord Jesus or Lord Buddha and the hearing of the sublime songs of Suradas, Tulasidas or Tyagaraja induce noble sentiments, holy thrill in the heart and produce tears of joy and Prem, and elevate the mind to Bhava Samadhi instantaneously. Do you see clearly the difference now?

He who has wasted the vital energy becomes easily irritable, loses his balance of mind and gets into a state of

explosive fury for trifling things. When a man becomes furious, he behaves improperly. He will do anything he likes. He will even insult his parents Guru and respectable persons. He does not know what he is exactly doing, as he loses his power of reasoning and discrimination. It behoves, therefore, that an aspirant who tries to develop good behaviour must preserve the vital energy. Preservation of this divine energy leads to attainment of strong will power, good behaviour, spiritual exaltation and *Sreya or Moksha* eventually.

There is no harm in looking at a beautiful woman. You can admire her beauty and think that the beauty in her face is the beauty of the Lord. Beauty is God. Woman brings the message that God is Beauty of beauties. Woman is the symbol of beauty. There should not be any lustful look (Drishti Dosha). The angle of vision must be changed as indicated above.

Again and again think that the beauty of the face is the beauty of the Lord. Godly feeling will arise when you look at a woman or a beautiful picture. Study the tenth chapter of the Gita—Vibhuti Yoga, again and again.

Physical Brahmacharya must be strictly practised at first. Control the body. Mental purity or mental Brahmacharya will gradually manifest.

Lead a well regulated moral life. Moral strength is the backbone of spiritual progress. Ethical culture is part and parcel of spiritual Sadhana. Loss of this vital energy is tantamount to practical death. Heavy loss of the vital energy is the cause of desire, miseries and premature death. Therefore take particular care to preserve this vital energy. Keep up Brahmacharya or the vow of celibacy. By the observance of Brahmacharya many of the sages of yore have attained Immortality. It is the source of new strength, vigour, vitality and success in life and eternal happiness hereafter.

4. ADVICE TO HOUSEHOLDERS

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

The Ashramas or stages of life are four, viz., *Brahmacharya*, the stage of student life; *Grihastha*, the stage of householder life; *Vanaprastha*, the stage of seclusion (forest-living); and *Sannyasa*, the stage of total renunciation. Each order of life has its own duties. In none of these stages must a man grasp at the special duties of the other three. At the present moment, it is difficult to maintain or observe the exact details of the ancient rules, as the conditions have changed very much. But, if we can have a clear idea of the fundamental duties of each, we shall still be able to shape the life through a regulated course of development and steady growth.

The student, after finishing his studies, enters the order of *Grihastha*, when he is ready to take up the duties and responsibilities of household life. Of all Ashramas, that of the householder is the highest as he verily supports the other three. As all the streams and rivers flow to rest in the ocean, even so all the Ashramas flow to rest in the householder. This household life is the field for developing various virtues such as mercy, love, generosity, patience, tolerance, purity, prudence, right judgment, etc. It is highly lamentable to note that the grandeur, solemnity and dignity of this stage of life is not fully realised these days.

A householder has duties to do towards the society, his neighbours, country, friends, relations, wife, children and parents. He must serve religious or social institutions for some hours daily in a disinterested manner with the spirit of Karma Yoga. This will purify his heart and prepare the Antahkarana for the descent of divine light. He must treat his neighbours as his own self. He should share what he has, — material, mental and spiritual — with others.

He must give good education to his sons and daughters

and treat his wife well as she is his partner in life and religious performances (Ardhangini). Parents are veritable gods on earth. Therefore he should serve them nicely, and carry out their behests to their entire satisfaction. He should perform *Sraddha* (annual rites to the departed souls) every year and offer *Tarpana* to his *Pitrus* or ancestors.

Every householder should perform the following Yajnas. The fire place, the water pot, the cutting, grinding and sweeping apparatuses are the five places where injury to life is committed, daily. The sins committed here are said to be washed away by the five Maha Yajnas which every Dwija (householder) ought to perform and which are intended to satisfy the Bhutas, the Rishis, the men, the gods and the Pitrus. The five great Yajnas (Pancha Maha Yajnas) are: (1) *Deva Yajna*: This consists of offering oblations unto Devatas or gods with recitation of Vedic Mantras; (2) *Rishi Yajna*: This consists of study of Vedas and teaching of Vedas to students and offering of oblations to Rishis; (3) *Pitru Yajna*: It consists of *Tarpana* or oblations to departed souls and *Sraddha* or annual religious rites performed for departed souls; (4) *Bhuta Yajna*: This is distribution of food to cows, crows and animals. This develops cosmic love and an Advaitic feeling of oneness; and (5) *Atithi Yajna*: This consists of giving food to guests and honouring them.

The Pitrus are forefathers who dwell in Pitruloka. They possess clairvoyance and clairaudience. Recitation of Mantras exercises tremendous influence through their vibration. The Pitrus hear the sounds through the power of clairaudience and they are pleased. They bless those who offer the oblation. In *Sraddha*, the essence of food offerings is taken up by sun's rays to Suryaloka and the departed souls are pleased with the offerings. Even in the West many persons perform *Tarpana* and *Sraddha*. They have scientifically investigated into the beneficial effects of

such oblations. It is the imperative duty of all householders to perform Sraddha and Tarpana to please the Rishis and the Pitrus. It is only the deluded souls with perverted intellects who misconstrue things and neglect to perform the sacred ceremonies and consequently suffer.

The worldly duties are not ties. The world is the best teacher. You are not required to renounce the world and take shelter in the Himalayan caves to claim back your lost divinity. The world cannot stand in the way of your God-realisation. Live in the world but allow not the world to live in you. He who living in the midst of temptations of the world attains perfection is the true hero.

A householder should earn money by honest means and distribute it in the proper manner. He should spend one-tenth of his income in charity. He should enjoy sensual pleasures within the limits of the moral law.

Householders have got a very responsible duty in training their children. If they want to shirk this responsibility, they ought to have checked their itching sensation caused by lust, and should have stopped procreation by becoming Naishthika Brahmacharis. Serious punishment is awaiting them in the other world if they leave their children untrained in this world. They themselves should lead an ideal life. Then alone their children can copy them. If they have wrong evil habits, their children will also try to imitate them. Children have got the power of imitation.

Parents should watch the habits and ways of their children, and take care not to allow them to join evil company. If they speak lies, they should be punished. They should not be allowed to utter any slang or obscene words. They should not be allowed to smoke and chew betels. They should not be allowed to go to cinemas and read novels.

Parents should give them Sanskrit education. The study

of Sanskrit is very essential. Even girls should be made to study Sanskrit. They should be able to understand the Gita.

Father and mother are only responsible for the character of their children. If the parents are irreligious, their children also become irreligious. It is the onerous duty of the parents to give their children religious training in their boyhood. They should themselves lead the divine life. When religious Samskaras are lodged in boyhood, they will strike deep root, blossom and bear fruit when they attain manhood.

The present-day parents, who are slaves of fashion, teach their children to put on collar and open-coat and to treat with contempt those who wear simple clothing. They teach their children fashion instead of sublime mottos such as 'plain living and high thinking'.

When the householder sees that his sons are able to bear the burden of his duties, when his grandsons are around him, the time has come for his wife and himself to retire from the world and spend their time in study and meditation.

Great Rishis of yore were married, but they did not lead the life of passion and lust. Their life of Grihasthasrama was a life of Dharma only. If it is not possible for you to emulate them to the very letter, you will have to keep their lives before you as landmarks, as the ideal for emulating, and you must tread the path of Truth. Grihasthasrama is not a life of lust and loose living. It is a strict life of selfless service, of Dharma pure and simple, of charity, goodness, kindness, self-help, and all that is good and all that is helpful to humanity. If you can live such a life, the life of a Grihastha is as good as the life of a Sannyasin.

Married life, if lived in a perfect ideal manner, is no bar to the attainment of Mukti. A good woman is to man what banks are to the river. She is the rhythm which leads him to Truth. Her love is God's grace.

At night, all the members of the house should sit in a circle and do Kirtan for an hour before the picture of their respective Deities. The servants of the house also should be included. In the evening, some four people can join together and read the Bhagavata, the Ramayana, etc. This will give peace of mind and strengthen the spiritual Samskaras. This will fill the mind with purity and divine thoughts.

That house is really Vaikuntha where the husband and wife lead an ideal divine life, singing the Lord's Name, repeating His Mantra, studying the Ramayana, Bhagavata, controlling the Indriyas and serving Bhaktas and Sannyasins. Householders should daily read in the early morning hours, after a cold bath, some chapters in the Gita, Ramayana, Bhagavata, Upanishads and Yoga Vasishtha, Vishnu Sahasranama, Lalita Sahasranama, Aditya Hridayam, etc.

Constant repetition of the Names of the Lord (Japa, Smaran) is an easy means of crossing the ocean of mortal Samsara or earthly existence. This is more suitable for the householders.

It is quite possible for a man to practise celibacy while remaining in the world, albeit there are various sorts of temptations and distractions. Many have achieved this in times of yore. There are many even at the present moment also. A well-disciplined life, study of religious scriptures, Satsanga, Japa, Dhyana, Pranayama, Sattvic and moderate food, daily introspection and enquiry, self-analysis and self-correction, Sadachara, practice of Yama, Niyama, physical, verbal and mental Tapas in accordance with the teachings of the Gita will go a long way in the attainment of this end.

Nectar's sons! Shake off all weaknesses. Stand up. Gird up the loins. Do your Svadharma satisfactorily in accordance with your caste or stage of life. Evolve quickly in spirituality.

Eternal Bliss, Supreme Peace, Infinite Knowledge can be had only in God. Practice of Svadharma will surely lead to the attainment of God-consciousness. There is no happiness in finite objects. The Infinite alone is Bliss. Understand the truth through the practice of Svadharma. This world is unreal. It is like a mirage. Senses and mind are deceiving you every moment. Wake up. Open your eyes. Learn to discriminate. Do not trust your Indriyas. They are your enemies. It is very difficult to get a human birth. Life is short. Time is fleeting. Those who cling to unreal things of this world are verily committing suicide. Struggle hard to practise your Svadharma. Keep the ideal before your eyes always. Have a programme of life. Attempt to realise the ideal. Stick to your daily spiritual practices with leech-like tenacity. Practise it and realise Sat-chit-ananda state right now in this very birth.

5. ADVICE TO VANAPRASTHAS

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

If you have finished the period of householder's life, if your sons are all well-fixed up in life, you must prepare yourself for the next stage of life, viz., *Vanaprastha* — dwelling in the forest. What is the use of repeating again and again the same process of eating, drinking, talking, dressing, etc.? You must achieve the *summum bonum* of existence. You must attain freedom or perfection. It is very difficult to get a human birth. This life is meant for Self-realisation. What is the difference between a man and beast if man continues the sensual life till his life ends? God has given man powers of discrimination, reflection and Vicharasakti. He must utilise these powers for attaining God-consciousness.

After retiring from service, as a preparation for a life of Vanaprastha, you should live for one or two months in Prayaga (Allahabad) or Rishikesh or in a solitary place on the banks of the Narmada or the Ganga or Yamuna where you can get Sat-

sanga of Mahatmas. Then only you can destroy Moha or attachment for your home and children. Then only you can have good concentration and solid spiritual practice. After two months you can return to your home. Live now in a solitary place that is situated a mile away from your house. Construct a small Kutir. Ask your people to send meals to your place. Sometimes you can take your food in your house. Then again come back to the banks of the Ganga. By so doing your family people will be used to separation. They will not get any shock. You also will get sufficient experience of a secluded life in spiritual practices. Eventually you can stay in seclusion for any number of years without any difficulty. Do not write letters to anybody when you are in seclusion. Spend your pension in charity. Plunge yourself in Japa, meditation, Svadhyaya, Kirtan and Pranayama. Draw a daily routine and stick to it tenaciously. You will derive wonderful spiritual benefits.

After some years, you can lead a life of total Vanaprastha. If your wife cannot lead a life of Vanaprastha, if she is much attached to the children, you alone can lead the life of a Vanaprastha. Remain in a solitary place which has a temperate climate and devote your time in study and meditation. If you have a tendency to serve the society, you can work for two or three hours with the spirit of Nishkamya Karma Yoga, without the idea of agency and without expectation of fruits. This will purify your heart quickly and prepare you for the descent of divine light.

He who has taken to the life of total Vanaprastha should not go again to his native place and live with his son. The subtle form of Moha and attachment will soon develop. Maya's ways are very mysterious. It is Moha that brings a man again and again to the Mrityu-loka, world of death. Moha is the strong weapon of Maya. The joy and sorrow of your family people will

disturb your peace of mind. That is the reason why it is said in the Sastras that a Vanaprastha or a Sannyasin should not visit his native place or native district or province for a period of twelve years.

The strict scriptural ideal of the Vanaprastha may not be quite possible to follow to the very letter in the present day. Man has not the same robustness of health and hardihood, the same endurance, strength of frame and iron constitution as the ancestors. If a purely jungle-life in complete seclusion is not possible, retire to a quiet village or a place of pilgrimage or a holy Tirtha. Live there upon a simple diet of plain bread and vegetable or even milk and fruit. Be extremely simple in your habits. Reduce your wants to the minimum, be devoid of luxury, and observe austerity in food, sleep, dress and all habits as much as possible. The highest ideal must be always in your mind, and within the capacity of your prowess you should strive to adhere rigidly to the true ideal.

If you find it difficult to lead the life of seclusion, remain in a solitary room in your own house or put up a thatched hut in the corner of the compound. If you can conveniently manage, live in a separate house and have a cook, or ask your people to send the food to your room. Do not mix much with family members. Have your interview time for an hour, say between 4 and 5 p.m. During the interview period talk on spiritual subjects only. Conduct Kirtan and Gita or Upanishadic class.

O aged man! What is the use of getting a human body if you do not utilise even the last portion of your life in divine contemplation, Bhajan or worship? It is very difficult to get a human birth. Wake up from your slumber of deep ignorance. Start spiritual practice at once. Realise the Self and be free in this birth!

6. ADVICE TO SANNYASINS

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

Every religion has a band of anchorites who lead the life of seclusion and meditation. There are Bikshus in Buddhism, Fakirs in Mohammedanism, Sufistic Fakirs in Sufism, Fathers and Reverends in Christianity. The glory of a religion will be absolutely lost if you remove these hermits or Sannyasins or those who lead a life of renunciation and divine contemplation. It is these people who maintain the religions of the world. It is these people who give solace to householders when they are in trouble and distress. They are the harbingers of divine wisdom and peace. They are the messengers of Atmic knowledge and heavenly messages. They are the disseminators of Adhyatmic science and Upanishadic revelations. They heal the sick, comfort the forlorn, nurse the bed-ridden. They bring hope to the hopeless, joy to the depressed, strength to the weak, courage to the timid by imparting the knowledge of Vedanta and the significance of the '*Tat Tvam Asi*' Mahavakya.

A real Sannyasin is the only mighty potentate on this earth. He never takes anything. He always gives. It was Sannyasins only who did glorious, sublime work in the past. It is Sannyasins only who can work wonders in the present and in the future also. Sri Sankara's name can never be obliterated so long as the world lasts. It was Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda, and Swami Rarna Tirtha who disseminated the sublime teachings of the scriptures and preserved Hindu religion. A Sannyasin alone can do real *Lokasangraha*, because he has divine knowledge, he is a whole-timed man. One real Sannyasin can change the destiny of the whole world. It was one mighty Sankara who established the doctrine of Kevala Advaita philosophy. He still lives in our hearts.

Just as there are research scholars or post-graduate students in Science, Psychology, Biology, Philosophy, etc., so also there should be post-graduate Yogins and Sannyasins who will devote their time in study and meditation, in research over the Atman. These post-graduate Yogins will give to the world their experiences and realisations in the field of religion and spirituality. They will train students and send them into the world for preaching. It is the duty of householders, zamindars and the administration of the nation to look after the wants of these Sannyasins. These Sannyasins will take care of their souls and in turn they will have to take care of their bodies. Thus the wheel of the world will revolve smoothly. There will be peace in the land.

Sannyasins should, on their part, be rooted in Advaitic Consciousness. Mere study of Vichara Sagar or Panchadasi cannot bring in the experience of pure, Advaitic Consciousness. Vedantic gossiping and idle, dry talk on Brahma Sutras and Upani-shads cannot help one in feeling the unity or oneness of life. There is no hope for him to feel the Advaitic unity of consciousness — '*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*' all indeed is Brahman', unless the aspirant destroys ruthlessly all sorts of Ghrina, hatred, petty-mindedness, jealousy, envy, ideas of superiority, and all barriers that separate man from man, by incessant, protracted service of humanity with the right mental attitude or Divine Bhava. Practical Vedanta is rare in these days. There are only dry discussions and meaningless fights over the non-essentials of various religions.

The central teaching of the Gita is Self-realisation in and through the world. The same thing is preached by sage Vasishtha to Sri Rama. To serve humanity, — God in manifestation, — and to think of God while living in the world amidst various activities, is superior to a cave life. Selfless work is Yoga. Work

is Atma Pooja. There is no loss in Nishkamya Karma. Real spiritual progress starts with Nishkamya Karma Yoga.

Glorious Sannyasin! Serve everyone with intense love, without the idea of agency, without expectation of fruits, reward or even appreciation. Utilise this body-machine in selfless works. Feel that you are only *Nimitta* (instrument) in the hands of God or a *Sakshi* (witness) of Prakriti's activities, when you do Karma Yoga. Have no attachment to any place, person or thing. Keep up the mental poise amidst the toil and moil of the world without consideration of success or failure, gain or loss, victory or defeat, respect or disrespect, pleasure or pain. Have always a balanced mind. Have the mind firmly rooted in the Self amidst all activities. Then you will become a true Karma Yogi. Work elevates, when done in the right spirit. Even if people scoff at you, revile, beat, kill or taunt you, always be indifferent. Be steady in your Sadhana.

This Sadhana demands constant practice, steadfastness, patience, perseverance and endurance. Practice of combined Karma and Jnana Yoga in the world is far more difficult than the practice of pure Jnana Yoga in the cave of Himalayan retreats. The former Yogi will have no *Vikshepa* or tossing of the mind, while the latter will be easily disturbed by a little sound, or bustle of the city. To keep up meditation while performing actions is a different kind of difficult Sadhana. That Yogi who keeps up the meditation while performing action is a powerful Yogi indeed. He has a different mind altogether.

Sannyasins do not want to remove *Mala* (impurities) by Nishkamya Karma Yoga. They think that service and Bhakti are nothing. They at once shave their heads, put on coloured clothes, remain in a cave and pose as great Munis or Yogins. They study a few books on Vedanta and style themselves as Jivanmuktas. This is a serious mistake. Even if there is one real Jivanmukta, he is a great dynamic force to guide the whole world. Some

Sannyasins of the old, orthodox school think that a Jivanmukta is without powers. He can change or alter the destiny of the whole world.

A Sannyasin should understand that this body which is supported by the pillars of bones, bound by ligaments, which is plastered over with flesh and blood, and covered with skin, as the foul-smelling refuge of urine and excreta. He shall have to emit this bodily frame which is subject to old age and imbecility which is the abode of diseases, afflicted with pain and suffering, the transitory embodiment of material elements, characterised by the impure quality of *Rajas* and *Tamas*.

As a tree tumbles down from the bank of a river, as a bird quits a tree at daybreak, so does the self become liberated from this delusion of a body. Thus by gradually abandoning all associations, and becoming free from pairs of opposites, his self shall merge in the Great Brahman.

The knowledge of the Supreme Brahman, extinction of all feelings of 'I' or 'Mine' etc., become patent to a Sannyasin only through the practice of unbroken meditation on the Supreme Brahman at all times. He who has not acquired this Knowledge of the identity of the individual with the Supreme Brahman will not obtain the highest good through mere dull meditation.

A Sannyasin must constantly utter the sacred Mantras related to the Wisdom of Brahman and the sentences of the Vedanta which treat of the Eternal Truth. Brahman is the refuge of the all-knowing as well as ignorant beings. It is the final Goal of the aspirations of all who wish to become Immortal.

On account of the privilege of witnessing the Self, a Sannyasin gets freed from all work, and becomes indifferent to the pleasures of heavens as factors of embodiment and enchainment. By constantly brooding over the Supreme Brahman, the wise one attains the Highest Bliss.

Sannyasins, however exalted they may be in spirituality, should not eat meat, eggs, etc.. and should not take tobacco, Ganja and opium. They should not smoke also. If they do so. they set up a very bad example to the public. They should lead an ideal exemplary life and advice the householders to give up meat, eggs, etc. Mind always imitates. If the Guru eats one pound of meat daily, the disciple will eat five pounds daily. 'Yatha Guru Tatha Sishya'— 'Just as the Guru is, so is the disciple.'

It is a great pity to see that some Sannyasins eat meat and eggs. They argue vehemently: "We are Paramahamsas. We can convert Tamasic foodstuffs into Sattvic ones. Meat helps our meditation. We do not care for public criticisms. For us vegetable and meat are the same. We will take whatever is served on the table. We see Brahman in everything. Eggs come under vegetable diet only." Very fine logic indeed! They can see equal vision in meat and vegetable but they cannot have equal vision in censure and praise, heat and cold, pleasure and pain. A single harsh word or slight disrespect will throw them out of balance!

Sannyasa is sterner stuff, indeed. Comfortable Sannyasa is very dangerous. It is no Sannyasa at all. All the rules prescribed for Sannyasins in the Narada-Parivrajaka Upanishad should be rigidly followed by Sannyasins. Then only they can shine as true ideal Sannyasins. Then only they can set an example to the householders. Glory to the true, ideal Sannyasin, who leads an exemplary life! This world is in dire need of true, ideal Sannyasins who will serve the country and humanity with Atma Bhava and disseminate Self-knowledge and Bhakti, far and wide.

May Sannyasins, the repositories of divine knowledge, the torch-bearers of Truth, the beacon-lights of this world, the corner-stones of spiritual edifice and the central pillars of the eternal Dharmas of religion, guide the different nations of the world.

7. ADVICE TO STUDENTS

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

Student-life is the best period of life. There is no family responsibility. A student is free from family-worries. Your father and mother take care of you. The school is the place for building good character and forming good habits.

Mother also is your best teacher. She can mould your character. What the teacher teaches in one month can be taught easily by the mother at home in much lesser time.

Have a programme of your daily work. Have a time-table. Stick to it at any cost. Morning time (5 to 7 a.m.) is the best time for preparing your lessons, Do not burn the midnight oil during the examination. This will affect your health. Play games daily. This will keep your body quite fit and vigorous.

Live honestly, work conscientiously. Act nobly. Try to possess a large heart. A really great man is one who possesses a large heart, great wisdom and good character.

A poor man may become a great man, if he so desires and if he tries to attain that greatness. Napoleon, Nelson, Lord Clive, Ramsay Mac Donald, Justice Muthu Swami Iyer, Cardinal Wolsey were born poor. They became great, through their exertion. Their glorious deeds are imperishable and their names immortal. But worldly position is nothing in the eyes of God.

Friends, you are the future hope of the motherland. You are the citizens of tomorrow. You should always think over the goal of life and live to attain it. The goal of life is the attainment of freedom from all sorts of misery or the state of Kaivalya or liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. Lead a well-regulated moral life. Moral strength is the backbone of spiritual progress. Ethical culture is part and parcel of spiritual Sadhana. Keep up Brahmacharya or the vow of celibacy.

By the observance of Brahmacharya many of the sages of yore have attained immortality. Brahmacharya is the source of new strength, vigour, vitality and success in life and eternal happiness hereafter. Loss of this vital energy is the cause of disease, miseries and premature death. Therefore, take particular care to preserve this vital energy. Practice of Brahmacharya gives good health, inner strength, peace of mind and long life. It invigorates the mind and the nerves and helps to conserve physical and mental energy. It augments the strength and courage. It gives power to face the difficulties in the daily battle of life. A perfect Brahmachari can move the world, can command nature and the five elements, like Jnanadeva.

Develop faith in the Vedas and the power of Mantra. Practise meditation daily. Take Sattvic food. Do not overload the stomach. Repent for your mistakes. Admit your fault freely. Never try to hide your faults by lame excuses or by uttering falsehoods. Obey the laws of nature. Take plenty of physical exercise daily. Perform the prescribed duties at the appointed time. Develop simple living and high thinking. Give up vile imitation. Get thorough overhauling of your wrong Samskaras you have created through bad association. Study the Upanishads, the Yoga Vasishtha, the Brahma Sutras and Sri Sankara's Select Works and other scriptures. Therein you will find real solace and peace. Some Western Philosophers have declared: "We are Christians by birth and faith but we can find the peace which the mind wants and the satisfaction the soul needs only in the Upanishads of the seers of East."

Move amicably with all. Love all. Serve all. Develop adaptability and the spirit of selfless service and penetrate into the hearts of all through untiring service. This is verily Advaitic realisation of unity or oneness.

8. ADVICE TO TEACHERS

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

A great onerous duty rests with the teachers and professors of schools in training the students in the path of Sadachara (right conduct) and moulding their character properly. They themselves should be endowed with ethical perfection. Otherwise it will be like the blind leading the blind. Before taking to the profession of a teacher, every teacher should feel the high responsibility of his or her position in the educational line. Mere intellectual achievement in the art of delivering dry lectures alone will not suffice. This alone will not adorn a Professor.

It is the duty of the teachers to explain to boys and girls the importance of Brahmacharya or chastity and the evil effects of an immoral life and to instruct them in the various methods by which they can preserve the vital Virya, the soul-force or Atma Sakti that is hidden in them.

The future destiny of the world rests with the teachers and the students. If the teachers train their students in the right direction in the path of righteousness, the world will be filled with citizens, Yogis and Jivanmuktaa who will radiate light, peace, bliss and joy everywhere.

O teachers and professors! Wake up now. Train the students in the path of Brahmacharya and righteousness and morality. Make them true Brahmacharis. Do not neglect this divine work. You are morally responsible for this onerous work. This is your Yoga. You can have Self-realisation if you take up this work in right earnest, Be true and sincere. Open your eyes now.

Blessed is he who trully endeavours in making his students true Brahmacharis. Twice blessed is he who tries to become a real Brahmachari. May the blessings of the Almighty Lord be upon them. Glory to the teachers, professors and students !

9. ADVICE TO WOMEN

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

My silent adorations and prostrations to the women of the world who are manifestations of Mother Durga! Thou art the creatrix, generatrix and nourisher of the universe. The destiny of the whole world is entirely in your hands. You are holding the master key of the world.

Woman is a manifestation of Sakti, the illusory power of the Lord. She is Chaitanya Maya. She is Durga or Kali in manifestation. She is a faithful companion of man and his partner in life.

Woman is the mighty work of God, the wonder of nature, the marvel of marvels, the abridgment and epitome of the world, the model of the house, the real governor, the representative of Prakriti or Maya, the Lakshmi who adorns the house, the sweet companion and helpmate of man.

She adorns the family circle. She charms man with her beauty, sweet voice, gentleness, sweetness, tenderness, grace and ingrained devotion and spirit of service. The whole charm of a man's earthly life is centred in a woman. It is the woman that guides and controls the destiny of men and nations. She silently rules and governs the world.

Women are the backbone of the Hindu religion. The Hindu religion has been preserved by our women only. Therefore, they should be properly educated. They should be trained to lead the life of simplicity, purity, piety and devotion. If they are inspired, the whole world will be inspired.

In India, religion is maintained by women only. There is a peculiar religious instinct in them. Hindu women are highly devotional. They infuse the religious spirit in the males through their daily conduct and practical life. They get up early in the

morning, cleanse the house, take bath, do Japa, make a small temple in their house, keep a picture of Lord Krishna, etc., and do Puja. They keep the place sacred and in the evening do Arati and prayer. The atheistic male members of the house are forced to do some prayer or other, through their influence, on account of fear. In reality, ladies only govern the house. They control the males. They are the manifestation of Sakti.

“Where women are worshipped, in that family great men are born; but where they are not honoured, there all acts are fruitless. Let women be always honoured by giving presents of clothes and ornaments and supplied with good food at festivals, jubilees and like occasions, and thereby made happy by those men who are desirous of wealth and prosperity,” says the Manu Smriti.

A good girl or woman should cultivate the habit of simplicity. She should never pretend to be what she is not. She should not shine in borrowed feathers like the jack-daw in peacock's feathers. She should not be vain in her mode of speech, dress, gait and behaviour. She should possess an unassuming amiable disposition. A modest woman commands respect.

When the husband has gone to office, the lady or the Devi of the house should instruct her children in reading and writing. She should nicely train them.

A sensible, cultured, devout and pious woman is the Lakshmi of the house. A pure and a pious woman is the goddess of the house; In fact she is the goddess who sheds sunshine and spirituality, happiness and joy, in the house.

Modesty is a fundamental virtue which a woman ought to possess. Modesty is the most precious ornament of a woman. It is the mark of nobility. A woman without modesty is like a flower without fragrance. Modesty raises the woman to the status

of divinity. Nothing can atone for her want of modesty in a woman. Without modesty beauty is ungraceful. A modest woman is restrained by a sense of propriety. She has a good behaviour and good manners, A woman without modesty is a mere void, although she possesses many other virtues.

A Sattvic girl or woman is really beautiful. She is not in need of any artificial decoration with gold chains, gold pins, nose-screws or with any ornament or fashionable dress. Fashion is a terrible curse. It is a dreadful enemy of peace. It generates evil thoughts in the mind. Fashion causes passion. Therefore shun fashion and be simple.

The chief duty of a woman is to maintain her Pativrata-dharma. *Pati* means husband. *Vrata* means a vow. Pativratyam is a Mahavratam or great vow for a Woman. A Pativrata is a chaste woman who has taken the vow of Pativratyam, who sticks to her Pativrata-dharma even at the risk of her life, who is faithfully devoted to her husband, who worships her husband as the Lord, and who serves him with heart, mind and soul. For a Pativrata, her husband is all in all. He is her sole refuge, protector, saviour and God. She deifies him as the Lord and adores him day and night. An evil thought can never enter her mind even in her dream. Anasuya, Savitri, Nalayani are examples of true Pativratas. A woman who practises Pativrata-dharma need not go even to temples for worship. The Lord of the temple is her husband.

Women, by their Pativrata-dharma, can do anything. Savitri brought back life to her dead husband Satyavan. She fought with the god of Death actually. You are all aware of the chastity of Anasuya, wife of Atri and mother of Sri Dattatreya. She turned the Trimurtis — Brahma, Vishnu and Siva — as her children by her power of chastity. Madalasa was a Jnani. She converted her sons into Jnanis. She used to sing while rocking the child in the cradle:

*“Suddhasi, Buddhosi, Niranjanosi;
Samsara Maya Parivarjitosi.”*

“O child, thou art pure, all-knowing and spotless; beyond the reach of Maya.” The children imbibed along with the milk of the mother the Vedantic teachings also and became Sages. You also should follow the example of Madalasa and train your children in the path of righteousness and Truth.

The wife should not look to the defects of her husband. Even if the husband is blind and deaf, even if the husband is extremely poor and illiterate, even if he is suffering from an incurable chronic disease, even if he is easily irritable and mean, the wife should serve him whole-heartedly. She must love him with a full heart. She should speak to him with warm affection. This is difficult; but, gradually she will gain strength of mind, power of endurance, through the grace of the Lord.

Even if the husband is unrighteous, the wife should be faithful to him. She should pray to God to put him in the path of righteousness, to infuse in his heart faith and devotion and to make him realise God-consciousness. A chaste wife who is sticking tenaciously to her Dharma can change the life of her husband to the path of righteousness even if he is leading a wicked life. Many have done so.

If a woman be pure, she can save and purify man. Woman can purify the race. Woman can make a home a sacred temple. The Hindu women have been the custodians of the Hindu race. The Hindu religion, the Hindu culture and civilisation still survive, in spite of the many foreign invasions, when other civilisations have come and gone, on account of the purity of Hindu women. The women are taught to regard chastity as their most priceless possession, and the loss of it as equal to the eternal damnation of their souls. Religion is ingrained in the Hindu woman from her very childhood. Hindu women illumine and enliven the house

through the glory of their purity.

The eternal fidelity of a Hindu woman to her husband makes her an ideal of the feminine world. From time immemorial, Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, Nalayani, Anasuya and Draupadi have been regarded as sacred ideals of Indian womanhood. They are sublime and exemplary characters who have exalted womanhood to the height of divine perfection. All of them were subjected to very severe tests in which their purity, courage, patience and other virtues were severely tried, and nobly did they come out through those tests.

Women of modern times should draw inspiration from them. They should try to lead the life they led. There is no use in becoming a star in the glittering cinema firmament which is set with dark, dense clouds. This is very poor ambition of ignorant persons. They should not come under the poisonous, materialistic influence. They have no idea of real independence. To move freely here and there, to do everything, to eat and drink anything, to imitate others, to drive a car, to go to the courts and do the work of a barrister is not independence.

Women of India should not try to imitate the women of the West. India is India. It is a spiritual country. It is a country of sages, Rishis, Yogins and Yognis and philosophers. It is an unprecedented country in matters that relate to the soul or the Adhyatmic science. The ladies will have to play a very important part in the religious field, and in training of children.

The performance of domestic duties, the management of her household, the rearing of children, the economising of the family means — these are the woman's proper office. Woman is already endowed with divine power. She already governs the whole world by her power of love and affection. To make noble citizens by training their children and to form the character of the whole human race, is undoubtedly a power far greater than that which women could hope

to exercise as voters, or lawmakers, or presidents, or ministers, or judges.

One Sachi rocked the cradle of her son with the Dhwani (chant) of Hari's Name, infused in him the honey of devotion and brought forth to the world a Gauranga who changed the mentality of the people of Bengal. 'Shivaji imbibed from his mother the spirit that worked in him; her true blood ran through his veins and made him what he turned out to be. Edison's mother — and not his ignorant teachers — answered his obstinate questions.

Women should become good mothers only. This is the function they will have to perform in the grand plan of God. This was meant in the divine plan. This is the will of God. Women have their own psychological traits, temperament, capacities, virtues, instincts and impulses. They have got their own disadvantages in society. They cannot, and should not, compete with men. They should not do the work of men.

Educated women can do any useful service to society according to their capacity, taste, temperament, aptitude, nature and standard of education, in a manner that is consistent or in perfect agreement with established principles or Dharmas of their mode of life. They should not do anything that can bring dishonour or infamy on them and their family and a blot on their character. Without character, a man or woman is considered as dead while living.

The ideal woman is one who manages the house efficiently, who looks after the comforts of the husband and serves him as God, who trains the children to become good citizens, who leads a chaste and virtuous life, and who plays the noble and important part of a good wife and a good mother. Women should become ideal wives and mothers. This is nature's scheme in the grand plan. O Devis! Fulfil this and be happy for ever.

In olden days, Hindu women also led the life of Celibacy, served the Rishis, meditated on the Atman, and obtained Brahma Jnana. They engaged themselves in Brahmavichara and Nididhyasana.

O Devis! Do not waste your lives in fashion and passion. Walk in the path of righteousness. Preserve your Pativrata Dharma. Study the Gita, Upanishads, Bhagavadgita and Ramayana. Become good Grihastha-dharminis and Brahma Vicharinis like Sulabha and Gargi. See divinity in all. Open the door of Elysian bliss. Bring Vaikuntha in your homes.

10. ADVICE TO DOCTORS (SWAMI SIVANANDA)

At present many doctors are ignorant of many things despite their qualifications and degrees. They are in darkness and are not able to diagnose where there is a complication. They have no real specific for diseases like asthma, malaria, lumbago, phthisis, cerebro-spinal-meningitis, typhoid, diabetes, blood-pressure, etc. They are still experimenting on the patients. They are very greedy and they do not take real interest in the patients. They neither have sympathy nor Atma Bhava. They frighten the patients when they have a simple cough by giving negative suggestions even when there is no trace of phthisis and by saying: "Oh, you have got T.B. You must go to the Sanatorium at Bhowali or Alps." The poor patient actually gets phthisis on account of fear caused by the destructive suggestions given by the ignorant doctor. Sympathetic doctors are very rare. How can the patients expect real solace and comfort from a doctor who has neither sympathy nor mercy, who has no training in Nishkamya Karma Yoga and who is intent on accumulating wealth ?

A noble doctor is one who says with sympathy and mercy even when a patient is in a dying condition: "Friend, don't be afraid. This disease is nothing. You will be alright in no time. This

medicine will give you strength and vitality and make you quite fit." Mere kind and encouraging words from the mouth of a doctor or anybody are a great blessing. They infuse new strength, new vigour and new vitality in the distressed patient. The patient is pulled round by the strength of these sweet words even without medicine.

A doctor may object: "Swamiji, I cannot get any practice if I say like this. I cannot maintain myself. I will have to close my dispensary and clinic. You are wrong in your statement. I cannot subscribe to this."

My answer is: "If the doctor behaves in the above manner, and if he follows my instructions, he will have a roaring practice. He will be foremost and the best doctor in the city. People will flock in thousands to a kind, sympathetic doctor. They will place their very lives at his feet and sacrifice everything unto him. He will get the blessings of the patients and the fruits of their good Sankalpas. He will amass enormous wealth. They will pay him amply, willingly with pure feeling of love from the bottom of their hearts. O doctors! Practise this method and see whether you get money or not."

That doctor who has no knowledge of the 'Science of Suggestions' cannot do much good to the people. That doctor who gives a destructive negative suggestion to the patients does immense harm and fatal injury. The doctor who has neither sympathy nor patience, who has no Atma Bhava, who fails to see the Self in all living beings, who simply uses his knowledge for accumulating wealth, lives in vain. His lot is pitiable indeed! He has eyes but sees not. Will a doctor dare charge heavy bills, if once he has clearly understood that the very same Atman which dwells in his own heart resides in all these patients?

In olden days, an ordinary Vaidya would cure a disease with some bazar drugs worth about two pies. In these days of

modern civilisation and scientific advancement, allopathic medical treatment has become very costly. All people cannot afford to have this. The patient has to get examined his blood, urine, faeces and sputum. He has to visit the Sapta-Rishis of the medical profession. He has to go to bacteriologist first for this purpose and has to jingle something at the table. The bacteriologist directs the patient to go to a dentist to remove the tartar and treat his pyorrhoea which is believed to be the root cause of all diseases. He has to pay him also. Then he has to go to the radiologist for taking a skygraph in the X-rays. He has to pay there, again. Sometimes he has to pay the board of doctors for expert diagnosis. He finds no real relief even after spending much money and energy.

A doctor, when he is working in the hospital, should think that all patients are manifestations of the Lord. He should think that this body is a moving temple of God and that the hospital is a big temple of Brindavan or Ayodhya. He should think: "I am doing all my work to please God, and not for any selfish ends."

The doctor who attends on his patients *with Atma Bhava* without selfish motive for money, will have a roaring practice. He will have to give free medicines to the poor. This is a wonderful field for selfless service. Through this he can purify his heart and evolve quickly and have Self-realisation. Doctors will have to impart knowledge of health to the public and teach first-aid to all. '

A doctor's heart should melt at the suffering of the patients. He should move from door to door and treat the poor freely. He should spend one-tenth of his income in giving free medicines to the poor.

The doctor should always bear in mind that the knowledge of healing he has acquired is not solely for mercenary gain but to enable him to play a worthy part in society. Therefore

apart from his 'practice' the doctor should ever watch and see where there is suffering and where his aid is needed. His duty does not merely consist in sitting at his table and waiting for the telephone bell to ring and call Him to a case. This is a moral duty of doctors.

A great service that doctors can render to the nation is to make all the children 'hygiene-conscious'. The health of the nation is to be safeguarded and built up right from the start. Parents fail to instruct children in elementary matters of health and hygiene. The doctors should make it their duty to impart the rudiments of personal hygiene to every child.

The doctor who is intent only upon extracting money from his patients, who has become callous to the sufferings of others, who is unsympathetic and harsh to sufferers, who imposes upon the credulity and ignorance of the patients and exploits their helpless condition is no better than a beast in human form. Grave retribution will overtake such a transgressor. Severe punishment is in store for him. The pain and the suffering that he heartlessly causes to the patients will react and descend upon him multiplied a hundredfold.

He should feel that all are manifestations of the Lord and that he is serving the Lord. Such a doctor is veritable God on this earth. Glory to this doctor !

11. ADVICE TO BUSINESSMEN

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

There is business ethics and a businessman should practise this ethics. Only then he will not be affected by sin. Only then he will prosper.

People say that one will have to tell lies in business if he wants to prosper. This is a serious mistake. Those who are strictly honest and truthful will flourish in business. More customers will

go to them only, as they are truthful in their dealings.

Falsehood first entered a cloth-merchant's shop. If you enter a cloth-merchant's shop, he says first, that one yard costs Rs. 8/- then bargaining or higgling goes on for one or two hours. At last he comes to Rs. 1.50 per yard. This sort of business goes on in most of the business houses. Cheating and falsehood are the basic traits of a businessman. His conscience has been blunted by covetousness and dishonesty. He is miserable in this world despite his wealth and possessions and, will be unhappy in the next world also, because he is not leading a moral life. He does not know what he is exactly doing, as his understanding is clouded.

Immorality does not mean sexual depravity and illegal adultery only. He who tells lies and cheats others is also leading an immoral life. He is also an immoral man in the broad sense of the term.

A manufacturer puts a spurious preparation in the market. One man mixes small stones in the wheat. One businessman adulterates ghee, flour and other foodstuffs. The carpenter uses inferior quality of wood and charges as for the best wood. A contractor uses third-class bricks and charges for first-class bricks, etc. These are all instances of cheating.

What is this glittering prosperity in the business, after all? To eat a little delicious food, to move in a car, to become a Municipal Councillor cannot give you ever-lasting happiness. This is not the goal of life. This is a foolish man's idea of happiness. Quite puerile indeed! These are all toys of ignorant children. Wise people will laugh at these things.

Earn your bread by honest means. Dishonesty and cheating will bring on you incurable diseases like cancer, tuberculosis, ulcer in the stomach, fistula, deafness, dumbness, blindness, burning in the heart and feet, and deformity of limbs

in your next birth. Action and reaction are equal and opposite. You will have to suffer in your next birth for every wrong deed you commit in this birth. Be careful in your thought, speech and action. Be good and do good. Understand the law of cause and effect.

Spend one-tenth of your income in charity. Charity covers multitude of sins. Do regular charity. Merely giving a few rupees in charity occasionally when you are in distress, is not praiseworthy.

Take a moderate and reasonable profit. Be truthful and honest in your dealings. Do not smother and kill your conscience. Keep your conscience ever clean and pure. Do abundant charity. You can prosper in your business. You will not be tainted and corrupted by business. Goddess Lakshmi will ever dwell with you.

Do Satyanarayana Katha every full-moon day. Help social and religious institutions. Open Sanskrit schools and Ayurvedic dispensaries, hospitals, girls' schools, free primary schools. Dig wells in the villages. Construct Sankirtan Bhavans. Let your profit be well utilised in charitable purposes. You will earn great merit. You will be happy here and in the next world.

If you are ever conscious that the Lord or the Indweller is witnessing your thoughts and actions, if you really have understood the law of cause and effect, you will not dare to do any wrong deed, you will try to avoid evil action and gradually minimise your wrong deeds.

If you have really understood the Vedantic truth of oneness you will not try to deceive others. In deceiving others you deceive yourself. In helping others you help yourself. There is only one Self in all beings. That is the only Reality.

12. ADVICE TO LEGAL PRACTITIONERS

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

There is observance of ethics for an advocate or Vakil, pleader or solicitor or barrister-at-law in the professional matters. He must not take up a doubtful case simply for the sake of fees, even when he feels sure that he cannot succeed.

He must not coach up false witnesses. Coaching up of false witnesses is itself a crime. It is a heinous sin. An advocate who coaches up false witness kills his conscience and soul also. In addition, he corrupts others also. He cannot have any progress in the spiritual path. He cannot argue forcibly, because falsehood has no strength. He cannot stand up with a majestic attitude as his moral backbone is fragile. He cannot be sure of success though he may twist and distort in diverse ways. Truth alone will triumph in the end.

When he takes up a case he must sincerely work for it even though there is some delay in getting his fees from his client.

He must take up the cases from poor people freely. He must work for the public good also without fees. This will be his Karma Yoga. This will purify his heart. Mark how sincerely and intensely Bhulabhai Desai worked for the cause of the public even during his last days. He has earned an undying reputation through this noble work. Prakriti has given you legal knowledge and you should utilise the knowledge in protecting her poor, helpless children.

Once Pundit Motilal Nehru wanted to take fees even from the Congress people. Jawaharlal Nehru said to him, "Venerable father! For whose sake are you accumulating money?" Motilalji said, "It is for you. You are my beloved son," Jawaharlal Nehru said, "Beloved father! I do not want even a single pie from your earnings, I will maintain myself independently; Kindly take up the case without fees. This is public Seva." This

opened the eyes of Motilalji. He said, "Jawaharlal, call those people. I sent them away with an unsympathetic heart. I will work in this case without fees". The words of Jawaharlal changed the life of his father. He abandoned his legal profession and became a sincere fiery Congress worker.

Lawyers say, "We cannot pull on in this profession without telling direct lies or modified lies. We cannot get success without coaching up false witnesses." This is a mistake. Lawyers who deliberately falsify truth and twist falsehood to make it appear as fact are the minions of Kali-purusha himself. They have allied themselves to the undivine forces of darkness and become the tools of Satan. There are some conscientious Vakils who do not take up weak cases and who do not coach up false witnesses. They are lions in the bar. They have roaring practice. They are known everywhere as honest and sincere advocates. Clients flock to them in great numbers. Truthful persons only will shine and get success. Study the book "Experiments with Truth", by Mahatma Gandhi and you will know how truthful was Gandhiji in his profession.

By your clever advocacy you have sent many innocent persons to the jail and to the gallows. What a great crime! What a horrible unpardonable deed! You will reap the consequences of this sinful act. You will have no good merit in your store for good future birth. You will take inferior births. You will suffer from incurable diseases in the next birth.

Have you not heard of the great sensational Tirupati case? Lord Venkatesa himself came as a witness. The judge gave up his job and became an ascetic.

So established in untruth, deception and crookedness is man that he is not fully aware how great and grave an injury he is doing to society. The existence of law is to uphold truth and dispense justice. But immorality in the profession strikes at the

root of justice and righteousness itself and where truth is to be established there falsehood is glorified.

Money is not the goal. It cannot give you eternal happiness. Lead a virtuous life. Be honest and truthful. Do not coach up false witnesses. Plead for the poor freely. Do Japa, Kirtan and meditation. You too can attain the final emancipation or the abode of immortal bliss.

13. ADVICE TO INDUSTRIALISTS

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

Times have changed vastly. Society is not what it was hundreds of years before. Humanity has developed newer fields that were absent in the ancient social order. There is industrialisation of whole nations. Large-scale industries and factory systems are everywhere. These factors give rise therefore for ethical rules peculiarly suited to the conditions and situations prevailing under these special circumstances.

An industrialist becomes too machine-minded. He comes to regard the army of workers he employs to be so many automatons. He has no sympathy towards the labourers. This is wrong. It is his moral duty to look to their welfare inasmuch as their labours go to build up his prosperity.

Usually labour in vast large-scale industries is recruited from the domain of poverty. They are obliged to work for their very existence. The industrialist should not take advantage of this and extract sweated labour. He must pay fair and adequate wages, afford them facilities instead of driving them to undertake strikes, demonstrations, etc. Heartless exploitation of labour is a grave transgression of moral law.

Industrial relationship is based upon contract. However purely secular the sphere of industry is, yet a contract between man and man is always a sacred matter. This contract too should

be viewed as such. Then alone Dharma will prevail. The worker is equally responsible for respecting this mutual contract and should give his sincere best in the interest of his employer. This relationship is not merely centred upon giving and receiving money.

The existence of jealousy, malicious rivalry and cut-throat competition is the bane of modern industry. This is Asuric and unethical. Big industrialists combine not for co-operation but to crush and destroy smaller concerns. To corner the market by superior buying power and ruin small-scale industries is unethical. Creating artificial demand through wanton destruction of valuable raw materials when the latter is sorely needed by people, is deliberately flouting of ethical law. This is why grave retribution overtakes civilisation based upon such pillars of Adharma.

Greed and cupidity are the causes of industrial immorality. Insatiable craving for profit drives you to a total disregard of all Dharma. It makes you quite unscrupulous. Therefore give up greed. Lust not after wealth. Know that God has given you industrial acumen, genius for organisation and money-power to promote the welfare of human community. You are custodians of special talent and wealth for utilising them for common weal first, and then increase your prosperity.

May the present day industrialists realise their precarious drift towards Adharma and become helpers to the progress and welfare of the human race! May they stick to the laws of ethics and thus derive true happiness and peace in addition to material profit!

14. ADVICE TO NATIONS

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

Just as there is social ethics for the society, there is international ethics for the nations of the world for maintaining peace. Nations can prosper only if they stick to the principles of

international morality. Had all the nations adhered to the international moral principles, there would not have been any war at all.

Lust for power, dominion and self-aggrandisement overpowers the nations and makes them lose the power of understanding and the faculty of morality. Hence they break the ethical principles.

The ethical laws which govern the relations of individuals to one another in society should also govern the relations of nations to one another. There is absolute necessity for international morality. This dire need is keenly felt by the heads of nations after the Great War. A World-Federation should be established. Then alone international morality can be put into practice. A well-organised World-Federation can prevent war among nations and ensure peace in the world.

But such an organisation will function successfully only when its members are noble men with pure and lofty ideals. They should be imbued with the spirit of tolerance, cooperation and brotherhood. They must set aside narrow racial spirit and have wide universal vision. If not the organisation will fail like the League of Nations after the Great War and the United Nations Organisation today.

The advance of science has removed the barriers of time and space. Within a few hours you can reach London and New York. Now railways, ships, aeroplanes, radio, television have made the world one. The whole world is a closely knit unity now. Countries and nations are now interdependent. Economic prosperity or depression of one country reacts on all other countries. If one nation suffers, it brings sufferings on the other nations also, just as a diseased rheumatic knee-joint reacts on the mind and the other parts of the body also. A country or a nation cannot rise much in culture and civilisation unless other countries or nations also are raised.

Though the whole world is brought into a sort of unity, yet there is no international ethical advancement. There is not much justice, love and fair treatment among the nations. The brotherhood of man is forgotten. The law of the 'survival of the fittest', which applies to the animals in the forests, rules the international relations. 'Might is right'. Those who possess more atomic bombs are the rulers of the world. They can get more privileges in trade and commerce. They can be in possession of vast dominions. They exploit the weak, hold them in subjection. This is the cause for war and moral degeneration.

Equal privileges should be given to all nations. Every nation should have equal rights. Nothing should be the monopoly of a particular nation. No nation should have absolute sway or supremacy in anything. Sea, land and air also must be the common property of all nations, just as sunlight, breeze and water are the common property of all. All are children of God. Hence all are brothers.

Misunderstood and mispractised nationalism, imperialism and militarism stand in the way of the growth of international morality. Imperialism and militarism should die. Humanism, humanitarianism and Vedantism should take their places. Then alone there will be perpetual peace in the world. The Presidents and Dictators should come to India, study Vedanta and live in the spirit of Vedanta.

Vedanta and Vedantic ethics should become compulsory for all students in all schools and colleges of the world. It must be properly understood and put into practice by all. This alone will put an end to the manufacture of atomic bombs and machine-guns. This alone will contribute to peace, universal love, unity, proper understanding, world-harmony and brotherhood to mankind.

15. MESSAGE TO THE WEST

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

The West is immersed in scientific discoveries and materialistic advancement. Science has invented many marvellous things. Scientists are labouring day and night in their laboratories to invent many more things. They have invented television. They wish to create life and human beings in their laboratories. Science has added many comforts to man. He can, in a matter of a minute, ascend to the hundredth storey through the electric lift. He can travel to Europe or America in the aeroplane. He can hear the speech and music of the people of the world at his radio in his own house. He can cook his food through electricity. But it has made life very complex; it has rendered very keen the struggle for existence. It has increased the restlessness of mind. It has not contributed to the peace of man. Everybody admits this solid fact. Scientists should stop this business of invention for some time and direct all their energies towards purification of their minds and concentration on God or the Inner Self. They can behold now the hidden mysteries or marvels of the soul. They will be stunned now at their new spiritual discoveries. Scientists are really wonderful external Raja Yogis. Their attention and energies are directed towards the external universe and physical forces of nature. If they practise inner life, if they direct their attention towards God, if they try to live in the Self within, they will turn out to be wonderful Rishis, sages or Yogis. They have got all materials in them that can make them real Yogis in no time. What is wanted is that they will have to look within, to turn their minds towards the Self within.

America is keen after Dollars. The more one runs after money the more greed and selfishness he develops. Money is doubtless necessary for man but money is not the goal of life. One should not worship mammon. Dollar cannot give peace and

bliss. Peace can be had in one's own Self only through service, sacrifice, purity, love and meditation.

How infinitely you are busy with your body and its conceits, 'I', 'I', 'I'! "I am a doctor. I am an Englishman. I am an American. I am an Italian. I know everything. I am superior to that man. I can do anything. I am clever. I am very intelligent. I am very strong. I am the doer. I am the actor. I have done much charity. I have built a hospital in my father's name." There is no end for this 'I'. As soon as this identification with this perishable, impure body ceases, as soon as you realise that you are not this body, that 'this body is not I', that you are the immortal all-pervading Self or Atman, all sorrows will depart, all difficulties will vanish, you are saved from this terrible Samsara. You will reach the abode of bliss, the city of deathlessness, obtain inexhaustible spiritual wealth and drink the nectar of Immortality.

There are one hundred and twenty-three storied buildings in America. Each apartment in each storey is large and filled with air-conditioners and up-to-date electronic equipments. But there is no peace. What is wanted is a spacious or large loving heart with spiritual conditions (practice of Japa, Yoga, sublime divine virtues, constant meditation, Atma Bhava, Self-realisation) with high sublime thinking. You may live in a small thatched cottage; it does not matter much. If you have a loving large heart, you will be happy and peaceful.

Tell me, brother, who is superior? He who lives in a hundred-twenty-three storied building in America with plenty of aeroplanes and cars, with plenty of money, rolling in Dollars, with plenty of cares, worries, anxieties, with plenty of blood-pressure and other diseases, with a small constricted heart, with plenty of ignorance and its modifications, viz., lust, greed, wrath, etc.; or he who lives in a small grass hut on the banks of the Ganga, in Rishikesh, Himalayas, with plenty of health, with large

magnanimous heart, with plenty of divine qualities, with plenty of divine bliss, perennial joy and peace, with plenty of knowledge of the Self, without any money, cares, worries and anxieties.

Vedanta is that bold philosophy which teaches unity of life or oneness of consciousness. It is that supreme philosophy which boldly proclaims with emphasis and force that this little Jiva or human being is identical with the Eternal or the Absolute. It is that sublime philosophy which elevates the mind at once to magnanimous heights of Brahmanhood, Divine splendour and glory, which makes a man absolutely fearless, which destroys all barriers that separate man from man, and which brings concord, unruffled peace and harmony to the suffering humanity at large. It is the only philosophy that can really unite, on the basis of the one common Self in all, a Hindu and a Mohammedan, a Catholic and a Protestant, an Irishman and an Englishman, a Jain and a Parsi, on a common platform and in the core of their hearts also. It is the only philosophy that, when properly understood and practised, can put an end to World Wars and all sorts of dissensions, splits and skirmishes that exist in different nations and communities. All philosophers should bow down their heads with implicit obedience and perfect submissiveness before this grand philosophy. Sri Sankara, Dattatreya, Yajnavalkya and others preached and expounded this unique philosophy. Swami Vivekananda and Swami Rama Tirtha also preached this unprecedented philosophy in America.

All 'Isms' are bound to die, if they have no God as the basis of their activities. God is the very foundation of society. He is the substratum of this world. He is the very prop of this universe. He is the source for everything. He is the support of this body, mind and the senses. He is the Mind of minds, Prana of Pranas, Ear of ears, Eye of eyes and Soul of souls.

Communism is doubtless an offshoot of Vedanta but it is

a rebel child of Vedanta, as it denies God or the Self. It wishes to have equality. It wants to give comfort to people. It wishes to share the property of the State equally between the subjects. This is good. But it does not want God or anything about God. It wants toast and butter alone. It wants bread and jam alone. Bread, butter, jam — this is their all in all. This is ignorance. This is delusion. Can' material comforts alone give real happiness to people? Can material comforts elevate the souls of the people? Can they give food, solace, joy, peace, immortality, perfection for the soul? Certainly not. Where there is God, where there is religion, where there is spiritual Sadhana for attaining self-purification and self-realisation, where there is study of religious books, where there is abundance of religious institutions, holy men, monks, Yogins and high souls, there can be peace, prosperity, sound policy and happiness.

The world's need today is the Message of Love! Kindle the light of love in your heart. Love all. Include all creatures in the warm embrace of your love. Cultivate Visva Prem or all-embracing, all-inclusive, cosmic love. Nations can be united by pure love only. Love is a mysterious divine glue that unites the hearts of all. It is a divine magical glue that can unite nations. It is a divine magical healing balm of a very high potency. Charge every action with pure love. Kill cunningness, greed, crookedness and selfishness. It is extremely cruel to take away the lives of others by using poisonous gases.' This is a capital sin. The scientist who manufactures the gas in the laboratory cannot escape from sin. Forget not the day of judgment. What will you say unto the Lord then, O ye mortals! who run after power, dominions and wealth? Have a clean conscience and mercy. You will enter the kingdom of God.

16. MESSAGE OF FREEDOM

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

Om, Children of Immortality! The Lord is within you. He is seated in the hearts of all beings. Whatever you see, hear, touch or feel is God. Therefore hate not anybody, cheat not anybody, harm not anybody. Love all and be one with all. You will soon attain eternal bliss and perennial joy. Be self-disciplined. Be simple and harmonious in thought, feeling, diet and dress. Love all. Fear none. Shake off lethargy, laziness, fear. Lead the 'Divine Life'. Be a seeker after truth or reality. Understand the Law of Dharma. Be alert and vigilant. Overcome sorrow and conflict through enquiry and reflection. Move towards freedom, perfection and eternal bliss every second. Is there anyone among you who can say with emphasis and force: "Now I am a deserving aspirant. I am yearning for Moksha. I have equipped myself with the four means. I have purified my heart through selfless service, Kirtan and Japa. I have served the Guru with faith and devotion and I have attained his grace and blessings." That man can save the world. He will soon become a cosmic beacon-light, a unique torch-bearer of wisdom, a dynamic Yogi.

O man! Get yourself ready now. It is a shameful thing that you have lived in vain till now and spent the life in eating, drinking, sleeping, idle gossiping and worthless pursuits. You have not done any meritorious act. The hour draws nearer. It is not too late even now. Start *Namasmarana*, or the repetition of the Lord's Name from this second. Be sincere and earnest. Love all. You can make yourself worthy of His Grace. You can cross the formidable ocean of births and deaths and attain eternal bliss and immortality. Never miss a day in meditation. Regularity is of paramount importance. When the mind is tired, do not concentrate. Give it a little rest. Do not take heavy food at night. It will disturb your morning meditation. If evil thoughts enter your

mind during Japa or meditation, do not use your will-force to drive them away. You will lose your energy. Japa, Kirtan, Pranayama, Satsanga or association with sages, practice of Sama (serenity), Dama (self-restraint), Yama (right conduct), Sattvic or pure food, study of scriptures, meditation, Vichara (Atmic enquiry) all will help you to control the mind and attain eternal bliss and immortality. May God bless you.

17. MESSAGE OF SILENCE

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

Once the disciple of Bhaskali approached his Guru and asked him where that eternal, the supreme infinite Brahman of the Upanishads is? The master spoke not. The disciple asked him again and again but the master did not open his mouth. He kept perfect silence. At last the teacher said: "I have been telling you again and again, but you do not understand me. What am I to do? The Brahman, the Infinite, the Eternal cannot be explained through words. Know it by deep silence. There is no other place for Him to dwell in, but in the one eternal deep Silence. *Ayam Atma Santah* — This Atman is Silence."

Silence is Atman. Silence is Brahman. Silence is Truth. Silence is Immortal Soul. Silence is the substratum for this body, mind, Prana and the senses. Silence is the basis or background for this sense-universe. Silence is power. Silence is a living force. Silence is the only Reality. The peace that passeth all understanding is Silence. The goal of your life is Silence. The aim of life is Silence. The purpose of your existence is Silence, Silence is within. It can be felt or realised by silencing the boisterous mind. If you can feel it within, you can surely express it without.

The message of the Sahara desert is Silence. The message of the Himalayas is Silence. The message of the Avadhuta who lives stark naked at the icy Gangotri or Kailas

is Silence. The message of Lord Dakshinamurthy was Silence. Who can describe the glory of Silence ?

There is no healing balm better than Silence for those persons who have a wounded heart from failures, disappointments and losses. There is no soothing panacea better than Silence for those who have wounded nerves from the turmoil of life, from friction, rupture and frequent domestic quarrels and troubles.

In deep sleep you are in close touch with this stupendous Silence, but there is the veil of *Avidya* or ignorance. The silence that you enjoy during deep sleep and the silence that you experience at dead of night give the clue to the existence of that ocean of Silence or Brahman.

Silence is golden. Silence is more eloquent than words. Seers and sages do not talk. Silence is the means of communication. Real aspirants who are pure and who live with sages only know this unique language of Silence.

In that stupendous Silence, you will find the proof of the existence of God. Learn to enter into the Silence in the morning at 4 a.m. for one hour by withdrawing the senses and the mind from the external objects. The language of God is Silence. Listen to Its soundless voice by stilling the mind. Hear the voice of the Silence with rapt attention. It will guide you. It will remove all your doubts. It will inspire you. Learn all about Silence from the newborn baby and become wise.

In the beginning, when darkness was rolling over darkness, there was Silence only. This Silence is *Chit*. This Silence is *Ananda*. This Silence is pure, all-pervading, indivisible consciousness. Maya lies hidden in the corner of this Silence in a seed-state during Cosmic-Pralaya. In the beginning of Maha Kalpa, Brahman wills and vibration (*Spandana*) arises. The equilibrium of three Gunas is then disturbed. Sattva, Rajas and

Tamas manifest. Then the Samsaric wheel is set in motion. It is the Rajas that generates much activities and much noise in the world. Rajas is passion. Rajas is motion.

In common parlance to sit quiet without talking to anybody is silence. If your friend does not write to you for a long time, you will say: "My friend is keeping icy silence. I do not know why." If nobody talks in a big lecture hall for some time when there is a thrilling lecture, you say: "There was pindrop silence last evening when Mr. So and so delivered a lecture," When the boys make much noise in the class the teacher says: "Silence please." When you come across two Sadhus, one Sadhus tells: "The other Sadhu is a Mowni. He is my friend. He is observing the vow of silence for the last six years." This is all physical silence.

If you do not allow the eyes to see the objects, and if you withdraw them from the objects through the practice of *Pratyahara* or *Dama*, this is silence of that particular sense — eye. If you do not allow the ears to hear any sound, it is silence of that particular Indriya — ear. If you observe complete fast on Ekadasi days without taking even a drop of water, it is silence of that Indriya — tongue. If you do not perform any work and if you sit on Padmasana for three hours, it is silence of the feet and hands.

What is really wanted is silence of the bubbling mind. You can observe the vow of silence but the mind will be building images. Sankalpa will be cropping up. Chitta will be developing memories. Imagination, reasoning, reflection and various other functionings of the mind will be going on continuously. How can you have real peace or silence now? Intellect should cease functioning. The inner astral senses should be at perfect rest. All the waves of the mind should be completely subsided. The mind should rest in the ocean of Silence or Brahman. Then only you can enjoy real ever-lasting Silence.

Of course much depends upon the practice. You know that practice makes a man perfect. Feel the thrill of extreme joy that dawns when you are nearing the goal. You will experience the wonderful calm now. In that profound Silence, all the mysteries of the Atman will be revealed unto you, like Amalaka fruit in the palm of your hand. Avidya and Maya and their effects, Moha, fear, etc., will take to their heels. There will experience the wonderful calm now. In bliss only everywhere.

Purify the mind and meditate. Be still and know that you are God in essence. Calm the mind. Silence the bubbling thoughts and surging emotions. Plunge yourself deep into the innermost recesses of your heart and enjoy the magnanimous Silence.

Understand the power of Silence. The power of Silence is infinitely greater than lectures, talks, orations and discourses. The language of Silence is the language of God. Sit silently and restrain the mental modifications. Sit silently and send out the inner spiritual force to the whole world. The whole universe will be benefited. Live in Silence. Rest in Silence. Become Silent. Know the Self and be free!

18. INSPIRING MESSAGE FOR EVERYONE (SWAMI SIVANANDA)

Every man in the world is restless and is striving after something; what, he does not know. He feels he is in want of something, the nature of which he does not exactly comprehend. He seeks in the accomplishment of ambitious projects the rest, that he feels, he is in need of. But he finds that worldly greatness, when secured, is a delusion and a snare; he doubtless does not find any happiness or peace in it. He gets degrees, diplomas, titles, honours, power, name and fame; he marries, he begets children; in short, he gets all that he supposes would give him happiness. But he finds no rest. Pious men, saints and sages declare that this restlessness of every man, this state of discontent, dissatisfaction

and uncomfortableness of being ill at ease with himself and surroundings, is solely due to the loss of the companionship of the partner of his Soul.

There is not even an iota of bliss in this world. All are illusory in this universe. All worldly things are generative of pain only and are fraught with all dangers. This life is ephemeral. There is nothing so baneful as this life which is perishable in its nature. What beauty is there to be enjoyed in this body which is composed of blood and flesh and which has a tendency to rot? Even the most virulent poison is no poison but the sensual object is truly so. The former kills only one body, whereas the latter destroys many bodies in successive births.

Fie on this uneven life which is attended with pains, sorrows, diseases and death. You cannot find one object in this universe which is sweet and beneficial for one twinkling of the eye at least. Even the greatest of persons will, in course of time, become dust — the lowest of the low. Emperors, poets, scientists, orators and intellectual giants have come and gone.

It is very difficult to get a human birth. This precious life is meant for attaining Self-realisation. Ignorant persons, like innocent children that do taste again and again sweetmeats which give sweetness for the time being, indulge themselves in illusory, transient, sensual pleasures and are caught, again and again, in the wheel of births and deaths. They are not ashamed to repeat the same sensual act. What a miserable life they lead! How pitiable is their lot!

You are elated when you get married, when you get a son, when you get some sudden fortune or increase in salary; but you feel sorry when your wife dies, when you lose your money, when you are thrown out of employment, when you suffer from some acute pain.

Now tell me, friend, what do you really find in this illusory

world — happiness or pain? Have you now understood the illusory nature of this world? This world is a mere show. The mind and the senses are deceiving you at every moment. You have mistaken pain for pleasure. There is not even an iota of happiness in this universe.

Will your son, or daughter, or friend, or relative, help you when you are about to die? Have you got one sincere unselfish friend in this world? All are selfish. There is no pure love. But that Lord, your real Immortal Friend and Father who dwells in your heart, will never forsake you though you may forget Him. Adore Him in silence, that God of gods, that Divinity of divinities, Highest of the most high. May He bless you with His love, wisdom, power and peace!

Minus skin, minus dress, minus ornaments, physical beauty is nothing. Just imagine for a moment that the outer skin is removed. You will have to stand with a long stick to drive away crows and vultures. Physical beauty is superficial, illusory and fading. It is skin-deep only. Do not be deluded by external appearances. It is the jugglery of Maya. Go to the source — Atman, the Beauty of beauties, the Everlasting beauty.

If your hairs become grey, that is the first warrant from Lord Yama, the God of Death. You must get yourself ready to meet him. The wrinkles on the face and the bending of the body will remind you of the warrant. When the teeth fall and the eyesight becomes dim, you must be fully prepared to greet him. You will get three hiccups or final passing of breaths, lying on the bed. When the last hiccup comes, all your possession will be taken away by your sons and partners. One will run after the savings bank pass-book, another will take hold of the cash chest, the third of your provident fund papers and insurance claims, the fourth of the ornaments that lie on your person, and so on. Such is life on this earth-plane. Why can't you see that the money is

well spent for your spiritual progress and the service of the poor and the Mahatmas? Friends! Try to attain immortality through devotion, meditation, purity, service, Japa, prayer and enquiry. All troubles and miseries will come to an end.

O Nectar's sons! Enough of this mundane life. Enough of this life of passion on this earth-plane. You have spent your whole life, energy and time in obtaining material wealth, power, name and fame. All your efforts have gone in vain. All your wealth is only a broken shell when compared with the inexhaustible or supreme wealth of Atman. Obtain this spiritual wealth. Give up this vain selfish struggle. You have walked too long with passionate eyes in this universe. Give up this lustful look. Meditate. Look within now and behold the marvellous Self and be free.

Atman or Brahman or Supreme Self is the hidden treasure. It is the pearl of incalculable value. It is the Jewel of jewels. It is the Gem of gems. It is the imperishable, inexhaustible, supreme wealth which no dacoit can rob. It is Chintamani of Chintamanis that will give man whatever he wishes.

Brahman is beyond speech, time and causation. It is limitless. It is tranquil and It shines with equal effulgence in all bodies. It cannot be a particular thing. It is *Chaitanya* or pure consciousness. It is *Vastu*. It is *Sat-Chit-Ananda*.

Knowing the nature of Brahman or Atman as such, attain freedom or perfection. Think yourself bodiless. Identify yourself with the Supreme Peace and Eternal Bliss of your all-pervading Self.

May you all lead the Divine Life, sharing what you have with others, singing the Lord's name, rejoicing in Him alone and melting the mind in the Supreme Self!

By indiscriminate clinging to wife, children, house, wealth and property, you have forgotten all about your essential divine nature. In youth you are enveloped in ignorance; in adult age you are entangled in the meshes of women; in old age you are groaning

under the burden of Samsara. When will you find time, friend, to do virtuous actions and worship God ?

Sensual pleasure is momentary, deceptive, illusory and imaginary. A grain of pleasure is mixed with a mountain of pain. Enjoyment cannot bring satisfaction of desires. On the contrary, it makes the mind more restless through intense craving. Sensual pleasure is the cause of births and deaths. It is an enemy of peace and knowledge.

Abandon these selfish struggles and schemes; for amassing wealth. Do all actions with Nishkama Bhava. March directly to that wire-puller (God), who is moving these toys of fleshy human bodies, who is keeping up this big show, who is behind this pageant. In Him only you will find everlasting happiness and perennial joy. Merge in Him by practising daily Japa and meditation.

Give up clinging to this illusory life. Take refuge in God. Develop lasting, sustained dispassion (Vairagya) or indifference to sensual enjoyments herein and hereafter. You have had countless fathers, mothers, wives and children in the past. You came alone. You will go alone. No one will follow you save your own actions. Worship God. Realise Him. All miseries will come to an end.

O Ram! Do you not wish to attain the illimitable kingdom of eternal bliss and perennial joy? Do you not long to attain everlasting peace and immortality? Do you not desire to dwell in that sweet abode of Brahman where there is neither pain nor sorrow, neither hunger nor thirst, neither fear nor grief, neither doubt nor delusion?

Then come, my beloved Ram! Develop real, lasting Vairagya (dispassion or mental non-attachment) by looking into the defects of sensual life (Dosha Drishti) and through association with Sages, Sadhus and Sannyasins (Satsanga).

Serve, Love, Give. Be kind. Be good. Do good. Practise vigorous Japa and meditation and attain God-consciousness or Self-realisation (Brahma Jnana) in this very birth.

May you all possess that master-key, viz., *Vairagya*, to open the realms of Brahmic Bliss!

May you all attain Kaivalya or Atma-Svarajya or Independence! May you all dwell in the immaculate Brahmic seat of ineffable splendour and glory!

Books suggested for further study

1. Ethical Teachings — Swami Sivananda
2. All About Hinduism — Swami Sivananda

LESSON - 11

ECONOMIC PURSUIT
(ARTHA OR ECONOMIC VALUE) AND
VITAL PURSUIT
(KAMA OR VITAL VALUE) –
THE SECOND AND THIRD
GRAND OBJECTS OF ASPIRATION
OF IDEAL HUMAN LIFE

Economic Pursuit (*Artha* or Economic Value) and Vital Pursuit (*Kama* or Vital Value)

(The second and third grand objects of aspiration or grand goals of ideal human life)

(The second grand object of aspiration or grand goal and the third grand object of aspiration or grand goal or *Purusharthas* of ideal human life according to our great, glorious, lofty, unique and ideal Indian Culture or *Bharatiya Sanskruti* are *Artha* (Acquiring of Economic Prosperity or Economic Value) and *Kama* (Fulfillment of Vital Worldly Desires or Vital Value) respectively. The writings, if any, or the relevant excerpts from the writings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati and Swami Chidananda Saraswati, the Authors of this book, on these two grand goals could not be collected by me from the books written by them. Therefore, in order that our student and youth friends can have some idea about these two grand goals of ideal human life, I have made a humble attempt and ventured to present, through this small writing, a very brief outline of the same. This writing is based upon my little, humble understanding derived from study of the writings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati, Swami Chidananda Saraswati and Swami Krishnananda Saraswati and other saints and sages.)

***Artha* (Acquiring of Economic Prosperity or Economic Value)**

Artha is the second grand object of aspiration or grand goal or *Purushartha* of ideal human life according to our great, glorious, lofty, unique and ideal Indian Culture or *Bharatiya Sanskruti*. It is called Economic Value. It means earning of money and acquiring of material wealth. Human beings need *Artha* to meet the basic and other secular necessities of life of themselves and their family members, such as food, clothing, house, medicines, education of children, their marriages,

engagement in some occupation/business/profession, etc., in order to help/ ensure their physical existence and to live a reasonably comfortable life upon the earth plane. They require *Artha* also to meet their social and national needs and obligations. In addition, they need *Artha* to carry out their *Dharmik* (religious) and *Aadhyatmik* (spiritual) pursuits/ activities in life. *Artha* is inevitable in human life.

When the aforesaid basic material and other necessities of life are met and wants are fulfilled, more and more new wants crop up for fulfillment. Also wants for deriving more comforts and then wants for enjoying luxuries in human life are felt and those wants propel human beings to earn more and more *Artha* for their fulfillment. This phenomenon takes place because the very nature of human wants is like that, i.e. human wants are insatiable. Therefore, human beings keep on earning more and more money and acquiring more and more material wealth (*Artha*) in order to fulfill their such kind of ever-increasing wants.

In course of time, constant desire to earn more and more money and acquire more and more material wealth such as cash, gold, valuable ornaments, electronic equipments and gadgets, motor cars, land, costly houses, luxurious bungalows, etc. develops greediness in the minds of human beings and because of such greediness, they keep on earning more and more money and acquiring more and more material wealth. They think that earning of more and more money and acquiring of more and more material wealth will ensure safety and security in their life and give them happiness and peace. They further think that earning of money and accumulation of material wealth, and thereby meeting various types of material and secular wants and enjoying luxuries in life is the main goal of human life and there is no noble, sublime, higher purpose to achieve in human life.

Because of making great endeavours to fulfill their ever-increasing material and secular wants and because of greediness,

human beings keep on earning more and more money and acquiring more and more material wealth by devoting their entire time and energy; and even by resorting to unethical, unfair and unjust means of earning, dishonesty, corruption, etc. and by causing loss, harm, damages to their fellow beings in the society.

Fulfillment of material wants gives material happiness and sensual pleasures only to human beings. Such happiness and pleasures of the body and mind are purely temporary. As comfortable and luxurious materials are perishable and subject to decay, the happiness and pleasures derived from their enjoyments soon get exhausted and their exhaustion gives rise to sorrows and miseries in life. Indulgence in such material happiness and sensual enjoyments also brings in weaknesses, sicknesses and diseases in the physical body and the mind which cause sufferings and pains in human life. Keeping oneself over-engaged in earning more and more money and accumulating more and more material wealth and ensuring their safe keeping results in increase in cares, worries, tensions, anxieties and restlessness in human life. Further, as good actions bestow good results and bad actions yield bad results according to the inexorable Law of *Karma* or Action, i.e. "As you sow, so shall you reap", the actions of human beings for earning more and more money and accumulating more and more material wealth by unethical, unfair and dishonest means bring in great sorrows and miseries in their life instead of bestowing happiness and peace.

Therefore, our Holy Scriptures and our Saints and Sages exhort that human beings ought to keep their material wants to the minimum; earn *Artha* by honest and fair means and without causing harm to others in accordance with the rules of *Dharma* or ethical code of conduct; earn that much of *Artha* only which will ensure a reasonably comfortable human living without going for avoidable comforts and luxuries (or in other words, they should live a simple life within the limit of their legitimately earned *Artha*);

and devote reasonably limited, rather minimum, time for earning of *Artha*. And, they further exhort that human beings ought to devote more of their time, mind and energy in leading a religious and noble life and in pursuing spirituality with a view to achieve the supreme grand object of aspiration or grand goal of human life i. e. *Moksha* or Liberation of the Soul or Union of the individual Soul with the Supreme Soul or Self-realisation or God-realisation, because achievement of this supreme grand goal bestows permanent happiness and eternal peace in human life with permanent cessation of sorrows and sufferings. It is most pertinent to note here that our Holy Scriptures and our Saints and Sages declare that the Creator has given us this rare and precious human birth for the only purpose of achievement of the said supreme grand object of aspiration human life i. e. *Moksha* and thereby, to get merged with the Creator.

In this context, it is also most important to note here that when *Artha* or earning of money and acquiring of material wealth by human beings are not in accordance with *Dharma* (ethical code of conduct) and also are opposed to *Moksha* (the supreme grand object of aspiration or grand goal of human life), their earning and acquiring result in great sorrows, sufferings and miseries in human life. On the other hand, if the same is in agreement with *Dharma* and *Moksha*, it leads to bestowal of happiness and peace in human life. As such, our Holy Scriptures and our Saints and Sages exhort that human beings need to ensure that acquiring of *Artha* i.e. earning of money and acquiring of material wealth is in complete agreement with *Dharma* and *Moksha*.

Kama (Fulfillment of Vital Worldly Desires or Vital Value)

Kama is the third grand object of aspiration or grand goal or *Purushartha* of ideal human life according to our great, glorious, lofty, unique and ideal Indian Culture or *Bharatiya Sanskruti*. It is called Vital Value. It means fulfillment of various

types of worldly and secular vital human desires i.e. physical, biological, mental, psychological and emotional desires. Like *Artha*, *Kama* is also inevitable in human life.

When worldly desires are fulfilled, human beings long to fulfill those same desires again and again. Because human minds do not remain satisfied with limited enjoyment of worldly pleasures, rather the more the human beings enjoy pleasures by fulfillment of worldly desires, the more becomes their desire to enjoy the same pleasures again and again. Further, when some kind of worldly desires are fulfilled, new types of worldly desires crop up in human mind for their fulfillment; and even illegitimate desires come to their minds and push them for their fulfillment. Thus, worldly desires keep on increasing endlessly and propel human beings to fulfill the same again and again. This phenomenon takes place because the very nature of human desires is like that, i.e. human desires are insatiable.

Therefore, human beings keep on fulfilling their ever-increasing worldly and secular desires by earning more and more money thinking that the same will give them happiness and peace in life. They further think that earning of money and thereby fulfilling various types of worldly and secular desires is the main goal of human life and there is no noble, sublime, higher purpose to achieve in human life.

Fulfillment of worldly and secular desires gives worldly happiness and sensual pleasures only to human beings. Such happiness and pleasures of the body and mind are purely temporary and subject to exhaustion. Therefore, when such happiness and pleasures soon get exhausted, their exhaustion gives rise to sorrows and miseries in life. Indulgence in worldly enjoyments and sensual pleasures also brings in weaknesses, sicknesses and diseases in physical body and mind which also cause sufferings and pains in human life. Fulfillment of illegitimate desires also results in great sorrows and sufferings in human life,

instead of bestowing happiness and peace, as bad actions yield bad results according to the inexorable Law of *Karma* or Action, i.e. "As you sow, so shall you reap".

Therefore, our Holy Scriptures and our Saints and Sages exhort that human beings should fulfill their need-based, legitimate worldly desires only; reduce such worldly desires and keep the same to the minimum; and live a simple life within the limit of their legitimately earned money or *Artha*. And, they further exhort that, human beings should increase their religious and spiritual desires and endeavour their best to achieve the supreme grand object of aspiration or grand goal of ideal human life i. e. *Moksha* or Liberation of the Soul or Union of the individual Soul with the Supreme Soul or Self-realisation or God-realisation, as achievement of this supreme grand goal bestows permanent happiness and eternal peace in human life with permanent cessation of sorrows and sufferings. It is most pertinent to note here that our Holy Scriptures and our Saints and Sages declare that the Creator has given us this rare and precious human birth for the only purpose of achievement of the said supreme grand object of aspiration human life i. e. *Moksha* and thereby, to get merged with the Creator.

In this context, it is also most important to note here that when *Kama* or worldly and secular vital desires of human beings are not in accordance with *Dharma* (ethical code of conduct) and also are opposed to *Moksha* (the supreme grand object of aspiration or grand goal of ideal human life), their fulfillment results in great sorrows, sufferings and miseries in human life. On the other hand, if the same is in agreement with *Dharma* and *Moksha*, it leads to bestow happiness and peace in human life. Therefore, our Holy Scriptures and our Saints and Sages exhort that human beings need to ensure that achievement of *Kama* i.e. fulfillment of various types of worldly and secular vital human desires is in complete agreement with *Dharma* and *Moksha*.

LESSON - 12

SPIRITUAL PURSUIT
(MOKSHA OR SPIRITUAL VALUE) —
THE FOURTH AND THE SUPREME
GRAND OBJECT OF ASPIRATION
OF IDEAL HUMAN LIFE

SPIRITUAL PURSUIT
(MOKSHA OR SPIRITUAL VALUE)
1. YOGA
(SWAMI SIVANANDA)
YOGA DEFINED

The word 'Yoga' comes from a Sanskrit root 'Yuj' which means 'to join'. In its spiritual sense, it is the process by which the identity of the individual soul and the Supreme Soul is realised by the Yogi. The human soul is brought into conscious communion with the Divine Reality. Just as camphor melts and becomes one with fire; just as a drop of water when it is thrown into the ocean, becomes one with the ocean; the individual soul, when it is purified, when it is freed from lust, greed, hatred and egoism, when it becomes pure (Sattvic), becomes one with the Supreme Soul. The science that teaches the way of acquiring this occult knowledge is called 'Yoga Sastra'.

Yoga, in a generic sense, refers to Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Laya Yoga or Kundalini Yoga. In a restricted sense, it means the Ashtanga Yoga or Raja Yoga of Patanjali Maharshi only.

The word Yoga is also applicable in a secondary sense to all those factors and practices that are conducive to the final achievement or fulfilment of Yoga, and as such indirectly lead to final freedom or perfection. Similarly, though the one who has reached the final Asamprajnata Samadhi or union with Reality is called a *Yogi*, one who is attempting to get perfection in Yoga is also called a *Yogi*.

Yoga philosophy is one of the six systems of Hindu philosophy. Unlike so many other philosophies of the world, it is a philosophy that is wholly practical. Yoga is an exact science based on certain immutable Laws of Nature. It is well known to

people of all countries of the world interested in the study of Eastern civilization and culture, and is held in awe and reverence as it contains in it the master-key to unlock the realms of Peace, Bliss, Mystery and Miracle. Even the philosophers of the West found solace and peace in this Divine Science. Jesus Christ himself was a Yogi of a superior order, a Raja-Yogi indeed. The founder of the Yoga Philosophy, Patanjali Maharshi, was not only a Philosopher and a Yogi, but a Physician as well. He is said to have lived about three hundred years before Jesus Christ.

Yoga is that state of Absolute Peace wherein there is neither imagination nor thought. Yoga is control of mind and its modifications. Yoga teaches us how to control the modifications of the mind and attain liberation. It teaches us how to transmute the unregenerate nature and attain the state of Divinity. It is the complete suppression of the tendency of the mind to transform itself into objects, thoughts, etc. Yoga kills all sorts of pain, misery and tribulation. It gives you freedom from the round of births and deaths, with its concomitant evils of disease, old age, etc., and bestows upon you all the Divine Powers and final liberation through super-intuitive knowledge.

Equanimity is Yoga. Serenity is "Yoga. Skill in actions is Yoga. Control of the senses and the mind is Yoga. Anything by which the best and the highest in life can be attained is also Yoga. Yoga is thus all-embracing, all-inclusive and universal in its application leading to all-round development of body, mind and soul.

Yoga is primarily a way of life, not something which is divorced from life. Yoga is not forsaking of action, but is efficient performance in the right spirit. Yoga is not running away from home and human habitation, but a process of moulding one's attitude to home and society with a new understanding. Yoga is not a turning away from life; it is spiritualisation of life

YOGA IS UNIVERSAL

Yoga is for all. Yoga is universal. It is not a sectarian affair. It is a way to God and not a creed.

The practice of Yoga is not opposed to any religion or any sacred Church. It is purely spiritual and universal. It does not contradict anyone's sincere faith.

Yoga is not a religion, but an aid to the practice of the basic spiritual truths in all religions. Yoga can be practised by a Christian or a Buddhist, a Parsee, a Mohammedan, a Sufi or an atheist.

To be a Yogi means to abide continuously in God and to live at peace with men. Yoga is union with God. Yoga is union with all. God dwells in all.

THIS IS NOT YOGA

A man gets himself buried in a box underneath the ground. He does this by plugging the nostrils through Khechari Mudra. This is no doubt a difficult Kriya. He gets *Jada Samadhi*. This is a state like deep sleep. The Samskaras and Vasanas (subtle desires) are not fried by this Samadhi. He does not return with super-intuitional knowledge. This cannot give Mukti or Liberation. This is a kind of feat only. This is not a sign of spirituality. People use this Kriya for acquiring money, name and fame. When they come out of the box, they stretch their hands for money. They make transactions before they enter the box.

Tie the hands and legs of a man with iron-chains and shut him in a room. Before you lock the door he will stand before you. Get inside the room. He will be again there. No doubt this is very, very astonishing. It is a mere trick. It is a kind of *Jaalam*. Some people can sit on a plank studded with sharpened nails and chew snakes like chocolates. If you pierce a long needle in their arms, no blood will come out. Some can draw water from

stone. A Yogic charlatan can perform all these things through some trick or *Jaalam*. But these have nothing to do with real Yoga.

The public will take a man to be a Yogi or Guru only if he exhibits some Siddhis. It is a serious mistake. They must not be overcredulous. They will be easily duped by these Yogic charlatans. They must use their power of discrimination and reasoning. They must study the ways, habits, nature, conduct, Vritti, Svabhava, antecedence, etc., of the Gurus and test their knowledge of scriptures, before they come to any definite conclusion.

PREREQUISITES FOR YOGA PRACTICE

Moral purity and spiritual aspiration are the first steps in the path of Yoga. One who has a calm mind, who has faith in the words of his Guru and Sastras, who is moderate in eating and sleeping, and who has intense longing for deliverance from the Samsara-chakra is a qualified person for the practice of Yoga.

An aspirant in the path of Yoga should have faith, energy, cheerfulness, courage, patience, perseverance, sincerity, purity, lack of despondency of mind, dispassion, aspiration, concentration, serenity, self-restraint, truthfulness, non-violence, non-covetousness, etc.

An austere and simple life is indispensable for Yoga. The foundation of Yoga is self-control. Discipline is the essence of Yoga, discipline of the body as well as discipline of the mind.

In the practice of Yoga, there is a reversal of the normal outgoing activity of the mind. Steadiness of mind is very essential for a reversal of the normal outgoing activity of the mind. Unless the mind is first made steady and brought under complete control, it will not be possible to change its course to the opposite direction.

BENEFITS OF YOGA PRACTICE

Life today is full of stress and strain, of tension and nervous irritability, of passion and hurry. If man puts into practice a few of the elementary principles of Yoga, he would be far better equipped to cope with his complex existence.

Yoga brings in perfection, peace and lasting happiness. You can have calmness of mind at all times by the practice of Yoga. You can have restful sleep. You can have increased energy, vigour, vitality, longevity and a high standard of health. You can turn out efficient work within a short space of time. You can have success in every walk of life. Yoga will infuse in you new strength, confidence and self-reliance. The body and mind will be at your beck and call.

Yoga brings your emotions under control. It increases your power of concentration at work. Yoga discipline gives poise and tranquility and miraculously rebuilds one's life. The Yoga way of life deepens man's understanding and enables him to know God and his relationship with Him.

Yoga leads from ignorance to wisdom, from weakness to strength, from disharmony to harmony, from hatred to love, from want to fullness, from limitation to infinitude, from diversity to unity, and from imperfection to perfection. Yoga gives hope to the sad and forlorn, strength to the weak, health to the sick and wisdom to the ignorant.

Through Yogic discipline, mind, body and the organ of speech work together harmoniously. For a Yoga practitioner, a new outlook, a new health, a new awareness and a new philosophy rush in and vividly transform his life.

Lust for power, material greed, sensual excitement, selfishness, passion for wealth and lower appetites have drawn man from his true life in the spirit into the materialistic life. He

can regain his lost divine glory if he practises, in right earnest, the principles of Yoga. Yoga transmutes animal nature into divine nature and raises him to the pinnacle of divine glory and splendour.

BEWARE OF SIDDHIS

If a Yogi is not careful, if a Yogi is not well-established in the preliminary practices of Yama and Niyama, he is unconsciously swept away from his ideal by temptation—Mara or Satan. He uses his powers for selfish ends and suffers a hopeless downfall. His intellect becomes blind, perverted and intoxicated. His understanding gets clouded. He is no longer a divine Yogi. He becomes a black-magician or Yogic charlatan. He is a black sheep within the fold of Yogis. He is a menace to the society at large.

Many people are attracted to the practice of Pranayama and other Yogic exercises, as it is through Yoga that psychic healing, telepathy, thought-transference and other great Siddhis are obtained. But Yoga is not for attaining Siddhis or powers. If a Yogic student is tempted to attain Siddhis, his further progress is seriously retarded. He has lost the way.

Do not stop Sadhana when you get a few glimpses and experiences. Continue the practice till you attain perfection. Do not stop the practice and move about in the world. Examples are not lacking. Numerous persons have been ruined. A glimpse cannot give you safety.

The Yogi who is bent upon getting the highest Samadhi must reject Siddhis when ever they come. Siddhis are invitations from Devatas. Only by rejecting these Siddhis can one attain success in Yoga.

2. KARMA YOGA

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

WHAT IS KARMA

Karma is a Sanskrit term. It means action or deed. Any physical or mental action is Karma. Thinking is mental Karma. Karma is the sum total of our acts, both in the present life and in the preceding births.

Karma means not only action, but also the result of an action. There is a hidden power in Karma or action termed 'Adrishta' which brings in fruits of Karmas for the individual. The consequence of an action is really not a separate thing. It is a part of the action and cannot be divided from it.

Karma, according to Jaimini Rishi, is the performance of *Agnihotra* and other Vedic rituals. According to the Gita, any action done with Nishkamya Bhava is Karma. Lord Krishna says: "Work incessantly. Your duty is to work but not to expect the fruits thereof." The central teaching of the Gita is non-attachment to work. Breathing, eating, seeing, hearing, thinking, etc., are all Karmas. Thinking is real Karma. Raga-dwesha (likes and dislikes) constitute real Karma.

HOW KARMA IS FASHIONED

Man is threefold in his nature. He consists of *Ichha*, *Jnana* and *Kriya*. *Iccha* is desire or feeling. *Jnana* is knowing. *Kriya* is willing. These three fashion his Karma. He knows objects like chair, tree. He feels joy and sorrow. He wills — to do this, or not to do that.

Behind the action, there are desire and thought. A desire for an object arises in the mind. Then you think how to get it. Then you exert to possess it. Desire, thought and action always go together. They are the three threads, as it were, that are twisted into the cord of Karma.

Desire produces Karma. You work and exert to acquire the objects of your desire. Karma produces its fruits as pain or pleasure. You will have to take births after births to reap the fruits of your Karmas. This is the Law of Karma.

KINDS OF KARMA

Karma is of three kinds, viz., *Sanchita* or the accumulated works, *Prarabha* or the fructifying works, and *Kriyamana* or the current works. *Sanchita* is all the accumulated Karmas of the past. Part of it is seen in the character of man, in his tendencies and aptitudes, capacities, inclinations and desires. *Prarabha* is that portion of the part of Karma which is responsible for the present body. It is ripe for reaping. It cannot be avoided or changed. It is only exhausted by being experienced. You pay your past debts. *Kriyamana* is that Karma which is now being made for the future. It is also called *Agami* or *Vartamana*.

In Vedantic literature, there is a beautiful analogy. The bow-man has already sent an arrow; it has left his hands. He cannot recall it. He is about to shoot another arrow. The bundle of arrows in the quiver on his back is the *Sanchita*. The arrow he has shot is *Prarabha*. And the arrow which he is about to shoot from his bow is *Agami*. Of these, he has perfect control over the *Sanchita* and the *Agami*, but he must surely work out his *Prarabha*. The past which has begun to take effect he has to experience.

Actions are of three kinds, viz., good, bad and mixed. Good Karmas make you a god or angel in heaven. Bad Karmas throw you in lower wombs. Mixed actions give you a human birth.

Every work is a mixture of good and evil. There can be neither absolute good work nor absolute bad work in this world. This physical universe is a relative plane. If you do some action,

it will do some good in one corner, and some evil in another corner. You must try to do such actions that can bring the maximum of good and the minimum of evil.

THE LAW OF KARMA

The Doctrine of Karma forms an integral part of Vedanta. The Law of Karma is one of the fundamental doctrines not only in Hinduism, but also in Buddhism and in Jainism,

As a man sows, so he shall reap. This is the Law of Karma. It expounds the riddle of life and the riddle of the universe. It brings solace, satisfaction and comfort to one and all. It is a self-evident truth. Fortunately, the Westerners have also begun now to acknowledge its importance and veracity. The Americans have now full belief in this doctrine. Every sensible man will have to accept it. There is no other go.

A close study of this law gives encouragement to the hopeless man, to the desperate and the ailing. Destiny is created by man's thoughts, habits and character. There is every chance for his correction and improvement by changing his thoughts and habits. The scoundrel can become a saint; the prostitute can become a chaste lady; a beggar can become a king. This mighty law provides for all this.

The Doctrine of Karma only can explain the mysterious problem of good and evil in this world. The Doctrine of Karma only can bring solace, contentment, peace and strength to the afflicted and the desperate. It solves our difficulties and problems of life. It gives encouragement to the hopeless and the forlorn. It pushes a man to right thinking, right speech and right action. It brings a brilliant future for that man who lives according to this universal law. If all people understand this law correctly and discharge their daily duties carefully, they would rise to sublime heights in the ladder of spirituality. They will be moral and virtuous and have a happy, peaceful, contented life. They can bear the

burden of Samsara with patience, endurance and strength of mind. There will not be any room for complaint when they see the inequalities in birth, fortune, intelligence, capacities, etc. There will be heaven on earth. All will rejoice even in suffering. Greed, jealousy, hatred, anger, passion will vanish. Virtue will reign everywhere. We will have a glorious Satya Yuga now with peace and plenty everywhere. Blessed is the man who understands and lives in the Law, for he will soon attain God-consciousness and become one with the Law-giver! Then the Law will no longer operate on him.

WHAT IS KARMA YOGA

Karma Yoga is consecration of all actions and their fruits unto the Lord. Karma Yoga is performance of actions dwelling in union with the Divine, removing attachment and remaining balanced ever in success and failure.

Karma Yoga is selfless service unto humanity. Karma Yoga is the Yoga of action which purifies the heart and prepares the *Antahkarana* (the heart and the mind) for the reception of Divine Light or attainment of Knowledge of the Self. The important point is that you will have to serve humanity without any attachment or egoism. Action of some kind or the other is unavoidable. You cannot keep quiet without doing anything. What binds you to phenomenal existence or *Samsara* is not the action but the idea of doership and enjoyership. Karma binds when it is done with a selfish motive, with the expectation of fruits. But when action is done without the expectation of fruits, it is liberating. If you act as an instrument in the hands of the Lord, as a participant in the cosmic activity of Nature, without expectation of fruits, that Karma will not bind you. Karma, then, becomes Karma Yoga. Work unselfishly. Feel that you are only an instrument and that the Lord is working through you. Surrender the actions and their fruits to the Lord. You will be freed from the bonds of Karma and enjoy peace.

The practice of Karma Yoga prepares the aspirant for the reception of knowledge of the Self. It makes him a proper *Adhikari* (aspirant) for the study of Vedanta. Ignorant people jump at once to Jnana Yoga, without first having a preliminary training in Karma Yoga. That is the reason why they fail miserably to realise the Truth. Various impurities lurk in the fourfold mind (Antahkarana). The mind is filled with likes and dislikes, jealousy, etc. They only talk of Brahman. They indulge in all sorts of useless controversies, vain debates and dry, endless discussions. Their philosophy is only on their lips. In other words, they are lip-Vedantins. What is really wanted is practical Vedanta through ceaseless, selfless service. Selfless service is the only way to remove the impurities lurking in the mind.

Two things are indispensably requisite in the practice of Karma Yoga. The Karma Yogi should have non-attachment to the fruits of actions. He will have to dedicate his actions at the altar of God with the feeling of *Ishwararpana*. Non-attachment brings freedom from sorrow and fear. Non-attachment makes a man absolutely bold and fearless. When he dedicates his action at the Lotus Feet of the Lord, he develops devotion to God and approaches Him nearer and nearer. He gradually feels that God works directly through his Indriyas or instruments. He feels no strain or burden in the discharge of his works now. He is quite at ease. The heavy load which he felt previously on account of false notion has vanished out of sight now.

PRACTICE OF KARMA YOGA

The practice of Karma Yoga does not demand that you should possess enormous wealth. You can serve with your mind and body. If you find a poor sick man lying on the road side, give him some water or milk to drink. Cheer him up with sweet, encouraging words. Put him in a carriage and take him to the nearest hospital. If you have no money to pay for the carriage,

carry the patient on your back and see that he is admitted into the hospital. If you do service like this, your heart will be purified. God is more pleased with such sort of service for the poor helpless people than with the service done by rich people with pomp and vanity.

If any one is suffering from acute pain in any part of the body, at once shampoo the affected part very quickly. Feel, when you massage, that you are shampooing the body of the Lord (Virat). Repeat your Ishta Mantra or any name of the Lord while shampooing. Pray also from the bottom of your heart: "O Lord! Remove the pain of this man. Let him rest in peace. Let him possess good health." Feel, when you massage, that the energy from the cosmic source, Hiranyagarbha, is flowing continuously through your hands. Some neophytes are afraid their energy will be depleted by massaging another person. This is a serious mistake. The more you give, the more you will get. You will be in tune with the cosmic energy or the Infinite. This is the divine law.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A KARMA YOGI

A Karma Yogi should be absolutely free from lust, greed, anger and egoism. Even if there are traces of these Doshas, he should try to remove them. He should not expect any kind of fruits for his actions herein and hereafter. He should not have any desire for name and fame, approbation, appreciation, thirst for applause, admiration and gratitude. He must have a spotless character. He should try to possess this gradually. He should be humble and free from hatred, jealousy, harshness, etc. He should always speak sweet words. How can a proud and jealous man, who expects respect and honour from others, serve others? He should be absolutely fearless. A timid man is absolutely unfit for Karma Yoga. He is fit to assist his wife in cleaning utensils in the kitchen in the morning and in washing her clothes in the evening.

A Karma Yogi should have a large heart. He should be free from crookedness, meanness, miserliness and selfishness. He should be absolutely free from greed, anger and egoism.

A Karma Yogi should have an amiable, loving social nature. He should be able to move and mix with everybody without distinction of caste, creed or colour. He should have perfect adaptability, tolerance, sympathy, cosmic love and mercy. He should be able to adjust with the habits and ways of others. He should have an all-embracing and all-inclusive heart. He should always have a cool and balanced mind. He should have presence of mind also. He should have equal vision. He should rejoice in the welfare of others. A man who is easily irritable and who can easily be offended for trifling things is absolutely unfit for the path of Karma Yoga. He should have all the organs under perfect control. He should lead a very simple life. He should bear insult, disrespect, dishonour, censure, infamy, disgrace, harsh words, heat, cold and the pain of diseases. He should have absolute faith in himself, in God, in scriptures and in the words of his Guru. If he leads a life of luxury, if he wants everything for himself, how can he share his possessions with others? He should burn his selfishness to the very root. Let me remind you the words of the Gita: "Restraining and subduing the senses, regarding everything equally, rejoicing in the welfare of all, these alone come to Me." Such a man becomes a good Karma Yogi and reaches the goal quickly.

BENEFITS OF KARMA YOGA

By doing selfless service you purify your heart. Egoism, hatred, jealousy, ideas of superiority and all the kindred negative qualities will vanish. You will develop humility, pure love, sympathy, tolerance and mercy. Sense of separateness will be annihilated. Selfishness will be eradicated. You will get a broad and liberal outlook on life. You will begin to feel oneness and unity.

Eventually you will obtain knowledge of the Self. You will realise One in all and All in one.

Generally people are impatient and they expect Siddhis after doing a little service. The real Karma Yogi who serves people with humility and *Atma Bhava* (seeing God in every face) becomes a real ruler of the world. He is honoured and respected by all. The more service you do with *Atma Bhava* the more power, energy and capacity you get. Practise this and feel.

If you really want to grow in the spiritual path, you must do all sorts of service daily till the end of your life. Then only you are safe. Do not stop doing service when you have become a famous Yogi, The spirit of service must enter every nerve, cell, tissue and bone of your body. It must become ingrained in you. Then only you will become a real, full-blown, practical Vedantin. Is there any greater Vedantin or Karma Yogi than Lord Buddha? He still lives in our hearts, because that spirit of service was ingrained in him and he spent his whole life in serving others in a variety of ways. He is indeed a magnanimous soul, one without a second. You can also become a Buddha if you apply yourself diligently to selfless service with the right mental attitude.

In the practice of Nishkama Karma Yoga, there is no loss of effort. There is no harm. There is no transgression also. Even a little of this practice can protect you from great fear of rebirth, of death with its concomitant evils. You will reap the fruits of Karma Yoga, viz., *Jnana*. There is no uncertainty here. The path of Karma Yoga eventually leads to the attainment of Bliss of the Self.

May you all attain purity of heart through constant selfless service. May you all shine as dynamic Karma Yogins radiating joy, peace and bliss everywhere. May you all rejoice in the welfare of all beings. May your minds be fixed in the Lord while your hands are in the service of humanity. May you all understand

the principles and techniques of Karma Yoga. May all your actions become offerings unto the Lord. May you all attain Kaivalya Moksha through the practice of Karma Yoga in this very birth.

3. BHAKTI YOGA (SWAMI SIVANANDA)

WHAT IS BHAKTI

The term *Bhakti* comes from the root '*Bhaj*', which means 'to be attached to God'. *Bhajan*, worship, *Bhakti*, *Anurag*, *Prem*, *Priti* are synonymous terms. *Bhakti* is love for love's sake. The devotee wants God and God alone. There is no selfish expectation here. There is no fear also. Therefore it is called '*Parama Prem Rupa*'. The devotee feels, believes, conceives and imagines that his *Ishtam* is an Ocean of Love or *Prem*.

Bhakti is the slender thread of *Prem* or love that binds the heart of a devotee with the lotus feet of the Lord. *Bhakti* is intense devotion and supreme attachment to God. *Bhakti* is supreme love for God. It is the spontaneous out-pouring of *Prem* towards the Beloved. It is pure, unselfish, divine love or *Suddha Prem*. There is not a bit of bargaining or expectation of anything here. This higher feeling is indescribable in words. It has to be sincerely experienced by the devotee. *Bhakti* is a sacred, higher emotion with sublime sentiments that unites the devotees with the Lord.

Mark how love develops. First arises faith. Then follows attraction and after that adoration. Adoration leads to suppression of mundane desires. The result is single-mindedness and satisfaction. Then grow attachment and supreme love towards God.

In this type of highest *Bhakti* all attraction and attachment which one has for objects of enjoyment are transferred to the

only dearest object, viz., God. This leads the devotee to an eternal union with his Beloved and culminates in oneness.

TYPES OF BHAKTI

Bhakti is of various kinds. One classification is *Sakamya* and *Nishkamya* *Bhakti*. *Sakamya* *Bhakti* is devotion with desire for material gains. A man wants wealth and with this motive practises *Bhakti*. Another man wants freedom from diseases and therefore does *Japa* and offers prayers. A third one wants to become a Minister and does *Upasana* with this aim. This is *Sakamya* *Bhakti*. Whatever you want the Lord will certainly give you, if your *Bhakti* is intense and if your prayers are sincerely offered from the bottom of your heart. But you will not get supreme satisfaction, immortality and *Moksha* through *Sakamya* *Bhakti*.

Your *Bhakti* should always be *Nishkamya* *Bhakti*. God has already given you a good position, a good job, wife and children and enough wealth. Be contented with these. Aspire for *Nishkamya* *Bhakti*. Your heart will be purified and the Divine Grace will descend upon you. Be in communion with the Lord, you will become one with the Lord and you will enjoy all the Divine *Aisvaryas*. All the *Vibhutis* of the Lord He will give you. He will give you *Darsan*. He will help you to dwell in Him. At the same time He will give you all the Divine *Aisvaryas* also.

Another classification of *Bhakti* is *Apara-Bhakti* and *Para-Bhakti*. *Apara-Bhakti* is for the beginners in *Yoga*. The beginner decorates an image with flowers and garlands, rings the bell, offers *Naivedya*, waves lights; he observes rituals and ceremonies. The *Bhakta* here regards the Lord as a Supreme Person, who is immanent in that image and who can be propitiated through that form only. He has no expanded heart. He is a sectarian. He dislikes other kinds of *Bhaktas* who worship other *Devatas*. Gradually, from *Apara-Bhakti*, the devotee goes

to Para-Bhakti, the highest form of Bhakti. He sees the Lord and Lord alone everywhere and feels His Power manifest as the entire universe. "Thou art all pervading; on what Simhasana shall I seat Thee? Thou art the Supreme Light, in whose borrowed light the sun, the moon, the stars and the fire shine; shall I wave this little *Deepa* or light before You ?" — thus the devotee recognises the transcendental nature of God. Para-Bhakti and Jnana are one. But every Bhakta will have to start from Apara-Bhakti. Before you take your food, offer it to God mentally; and the food will be purified. When you pass through a garden of flowers, mentally offer all the flowers to the Lord in *Archana*. When you pass through the bazaar and see a sweetmeat shop, offer all the sweetmeats as *Naivedya* to the Lord. Such practices will lead to Para-Bhakti.

Bhakti is also classified into *Gauna-Bhakti* and *Mukhya-Bhakti*. *Gauna-Bhakti* is the lower Bhakti and *Mukhya-Bhakti* is the higher type of Bhakti.

Go from stage to stage. Just as a flower grows in the garden, so also gradually develop love or Prem in the garden of your heart.

The enemy of devotion is egoism and desire. Where there is no *Kama* or desire, there alone will Rama (the Lord) manifest Himself. The enemies of peace and devotion are lust, anger and greed. Anger destroys your peace and your health also. When a man abuses you, keep peaceful. When blood begins to boil, it is impoverished. You lose vitality if you become a prey to fits of temper.

HOW TO CULTIVATE BHAKTI

It would be a gross mistake if you consider Bhakti as merely a stage of emotionalism, while it is actually a thorough discipline and training of one's will and the mind, a sure means to intuitive realisation of God Almighty through intense love and

affection for Him. It is a means to thorough apprehension of the true knowledge of Reality, beginning from the ordinary form of idol worship right upto the highest form of cosmic realisation of your oneness with Him. You can achieve this by following the eleven fundamental factors which Sri Ramanuja had prescribed. They are *Abhyasa* or practice of continuous thinking of God; *Viveka* or discrimination; *Vimoka* or freedom from everything else and longing for God; *Satyam* or truthfulness; *Arjavam* or straightforwardness; *Kriya* or doing good to others; *Kalyana* or wishing well-being to all; *Daya* or compassion; *Ahimsa* or non-injury; *Dana* or charity; and *Anavasada* or cheerfulness and optimism.

People put a question; "How can we love God whom we have not seen?"

Live in the company of saints. Hear the *Lilas* of God. Study the sacred scriptures. Worship Him first in His several forms as manifested in the world. Worship any image or picture of the Lord or the Guru, Recite His Name. Sing His glories. Stay for one year in Ayodhya or Brindavan, Chitrakut or Pandharpur, Benares or Ananda Kutir. You will develop love for God.

Every act must be done that awakens the emotion of Bhakti. Keep the Puja room clean. Decorate the room. Burn incense. Light a lamp. Keep a clean seat. Bathe. Wear clean clothes. Apply Vibhuti or Bhasma, and Kumkum on the forehead.

Wear Rudraksha or Tulasi Mala, All these produce a benign influence on the mind and elevate the mind. They generate piety. They help to create the necessary Bhava or feeling to invoke the Deity that you want to worship. The mind will be easily concentrated.

Practice of right conduct, Satsanga, Japa, Smarana, Kirtan, prayer, worship, service of saints, residence in places of

pilgrimage, service of the poor and the sick with divine Bhava, observance of Varnashrama duties, offering of all actions and their fruits to the Lord, feeling the presence of the Lord in all beings, prostrations before the image and saints, renunciation of earthly enjoyments and wealth, charity, austerities and vows, practice of Ahimsa, Satyam and Brahmacharya—all these will help you to develop Bhakti.

BHAVAS IN BHAKTI

When the devotee grows in devotion there is absolute self-forgetfulness. This is called *Bhava*. Bhava establishes a true relationship between the devotee and the Lord. Bhava then grows into *Maha-Bhava* wherein the devotee lives, moves and has his being in the Lord. This is *Parama-Prema*, the consummation of love or Supreme Love.

There are five kinds of Bhava in Bhakti. They are *Shanta*, *Dasya*, *Sakhya*, *Vatsalya* and *Madhurya* Bhavas. These Bhavas or feelings are natural to human beings and so these are easy to practise. Practise whichever Bhava suits your temperament.

In *Shanta* Bhava, the devotee is *Shanta* or peaceful. He does not jump and dance. He is not highly emotional. His heart is filled with love and joy. Bhishma was a *Shanta* Bhakta. Sri Hanuman was a *Dasya* Bhakta. He had *Dasya* Bhava, servant attitude. He served Lord Rama whole-heartedly. He pleased his Master in all possible ways. He found joy and bliss in the service of his Master.

In *Sakhya* Bhava, God is a friend of the devotee. Arjuna had this Bhava towards Lord Krishna. The devotee moves with the Lord on equal terms. Arjuna and Krishna used to sit, eat, talk and walk together as intimate friends.

In *Vatsalya* Bhava, the devotee looks upon God as his child. Yasoda had this Bhava with Lord Krishna. There is no fear in this Bhava, because God is your pet child. The devotee

serves, feeds, and looks upon God as a mother does in the case of her child.

The last is *Madhurya* Bhava or *Kanta* Bhava. This is the highest form of Bhakti. The devotee regards the Lord as his Lover. This was the relation between Radha and Krishna. This is *Atma-Samarpana*. The lover and the beloved become one. The devotee and God feel one with each other and still maintain a separateness in order to enjoy the bliss of the play of love between them. This is oneness in separation and separation in oneness. Lord Gauranga, Jayadeva, Mira and Andal had this Bhava.

NAVA-VIDHA-BHAKTI

Devotion to God is developed in nine different ways. It is supreme attachment to God through a Bhava predominant in the devotee. Intense love is the common factor in all the nine modes. Exclusive love for God is expressed through various methods. All Bhaktas of this type are above the formalities of the world. They are untouched by the laws of human Dharma and are out and out concerned with God.

Good conduct which is in accordance with perfect moral law is an auxiliary to pure Bhakti and it follows the true Bhakta wherever he goes. One cannot develop true devotion to God if he is crooked in his heart, if he has got objects of love in this world, if he is tempted by charming worldly things, if he wishes to take care of his wife, children and relatives, if he wishes to feed his body well, if he wishes to earn a great name in the world, if he wants to establish a permanent fame on earth, if he does not like to part with the alluring contents of the world. Perfect detachment from all objects is a preliminary to real devotion. Vairagya is the product of real love for God. One who has love for the world cannot have love for God. Where there is Kama, there cannot be Rama and where there is Rama there cannot be

Kama. Love for the world and love for God are diametrically opposite things. One has to be renounced for the attainment of the other. This renunciation can be acquired through the nine forms of Bhakti.

In the Srimad-Bhagavata and the Vishnu Purana it is told that the nine forms of Bhakti are *Sravana* (hearing of God's Lilas and stories), *Kirtana* (singing of His glories), *Smarana* (remembrance of His Name and presence), *Padasevana* (service of His feet), *Archana* (worship of God), *Vandana* (prostration to Lord), *Dasya* (cultivating the Bhava of a servant with God), *Sakhya* (cultivation of the friend-Bhava) and *Atmanivedana* (complete surrender of the self).

A devotee can practise any method of Bhakti which suits him best. Through that he will attain Divine illumination. *Sravana* is hearing of Lord's Lilas. Sravana includes hearing of God's virtues, glories, sports and stories connected with His divine Name and Form. The devotee gets absorbed in the hearing of Divine stories and his mind merges in the thought of divinity; it cannot think of undivine things. The mind loses, as it were, its charm for the world. The devotee remembers God only even in dream.

The devotee should sit before a learned teacher who is a great saint and hear Divine stories. He should hear them with a sincere heart devoid of the sense of criticism or fault-finding. The devotee should try his best to live in the ideals preached in the scriptures.

One cannot attain Sravana-Bhakti without the company of saints or wise men. Mere reading for oneself is not of much use. Doubts will crop up. They cannot be solved by oneself easily. An experienced man is necessary to instruct the devotee in the right path.

King Parikshit attained Liberation through Sravana. He

heard the glories of God from Suka Maharshi. His heart was purified. He attained the Abode of Lord Vishnu in Vaikuntha. He became liberated and enjoyed the Supreme Bliss.

Kirtana is singing of Lord's glories, The devotee is thrilled with Divine Emotion. He loses himself in the love of God. He gets horripilation in the body due to extreme love for God. He weeps in the middle when thinking of the glory of God. His voice becomes choked, and he flies into a state of divine Bhava. The devotee is ever engaged in Japa of the Lord's Name and in describing His glories to one and all. Wherever he goes he begins to sing and praise God. He requests all to join his Kirtana. He sings and dances in ecstasy. He makes others also dance.

Smarana is remembrance of the Lord at all times. This is unbroken memory of the Name and Form of the Lord. The mind does not think of any object of the world, but is ever engrossed in thinking of the glorious Lord alone. The mind meditates on what is heard about the glories of God and His virtues, Names, etc., and forgets even the body and contents itself in the remembrance of God, just as Dhruva or Prahlada did. Even Japa is only remembrance of God and comes under this category of Bhakti. Remembrance also includes hearing of stories pertaining to God at all times, talking of God, teaching to others what pertains to God, meditation on the attributes of God, etc. Remembrance has no particular time. God is to be remembered at all times without break, so long as one has got his consciousness intact.

Padasevana is serving the Lord's Feet. Actually this can be done only by Lakshmi or Parvati. No mortal being has got the fortune to practise this method of Bhakti, for the Lord is not visible to the physical eyes. But it is possible to serve the image of God in idols and better still, taking the whole humanity as God. This is Padasevana. Padasevana is service of the sick.

Padasevana is service of the poor. Padasevana is service of the whole humanity at large. The whole universe is only Virat-Swarupa. Service of the world is service of the Lord.

Archana is worship of the Lord. Worship can be done either through an image or a picture or even a mental form. The image should be one appealing to the mind of the worshipper.

Worship can be done either with external materials or merely through an internal Bhava or strong feeling. The latter one is an advanced form of worship which only men of purified intellect can do. The purpose of worship is to please the Lord, to purify the heart through surrender of the ego and love of God.

Vandana is prayer and prostration. Humble prostration touching the earth with the eight limbs of the body (Sashtanga-Namaskara), with faith and reverence, before a form of God, or prostration to all beings knowing them to be the forms of the One God, and getting absorbed in the Divine Love of the Lord is termed prostration to God or *Vandana*.

The ego or *Ahamkara* is effaced out completely through devout prayer and prostration to God. Divine grace descends upon the devotee and man becomes God.

Dasya Bhakti is the love of God through servant-sentiment. To serve God and carry out His wishes, realising His virtues, nature, mystery and glory, considering oneself as a slave of God, the Supreme Master, is *Dasya Bhakti*.

Serving and worshipping the Murtis in temples, sweeping the temple premises, meditating on God and mentally serving Him like a slave, serving the saints and the sages, serving the devotees of God, serving poor and sick people who are forms of God, is also included in *Dasya-Bhakti*.

To follow the words of the scriptures, to act according to the injunctions of the Vedas, considering them to be direct

words of God, is *Dasya Bhakti*. Association with and service of love-intoxicated devotees and service of those who have knowledge of God is *Dasya Bhakti*. The purpose behind *Dasya Bhakti* is to be ever with God in order to offer services to Him and win His Divine Grace and attain thereby immortality.

Sakhya-Bhava is the cultivation of the friend-sentiment with God. The inmates of the family of Nandagopa cultivated this Bhakti. Arjuna cultivated this kind of Bhakti towards Lord Krishna.

To be always with the Lord, to treat Him as one's own dear relative or a friend belonging to one's own family, to be in His company at all times, to love Him as one's own Self, is *Sakhya-Bhava* of *Bhakti-Marga*. How do friends, real friends, love in this world? What an amount of love they possess between one another? Such a love is developed towards God instead of towards man; physical love turned into spiritual love. There is a transformation of the mundane into the Eternal.

Atma-Nivedana is self-surrender. The devotee offers everything to God, including his body, mind and soul. He keeps nothing for himself. He loses even his own self. He has no personal and independent existence. He has given up his self for God. He has become part and parcel of God. God takes care of him and God treats him as Himself. Grief and sorrow, pleasure and pain, the devotee treats as gifts sent by God and does not attach himself to them. He considers himself as a puppet of God and an instrument in the hands of God.

This self-surrender is Absolute Love for God exclusively. There is nothing but God-consciousness in the devotee. Even against his own wishes, the devotee shall become one with God and lose his individuality. This is the law of being. The highest truth is Absoluteness and the soul rises above through different states of consciousness until it attains Absolute Perfection when

it becomes identical with God. This is the culmination of all aspiration and love.

The nine modes of Bhakti are the ways in which a devotee attains the Supreme Ideal of life. A devotee can take up any of these paths and reach the highest state. The path of Bhakti is the easiest of all and is not very much against the nature of the human inclinations. It slowly and gradually takes the individual to the Supreme without frustrating his human instincts. It is not direct assertion of God, but a progressive realisation of Him.

FRUITS OF BHAKTI

Bhakti softens the heart and removes jealousy, hatred, lust, anger, egoism, pride and arrogance. It infuses joy, divine ecstasy, bliss, peace and knowledge. All cares, worries and anxieties, fears, mental torments and tribulations entirely vanish. The devotee is freed from the Samsaric wheel of births and deaths. He attains the immortal abode of everlasting peace, bliss and knowledge.

The fruit of Bhakti is Jnana. Jnana intensifies Bhakti. Even Jnanis like Sankara, Madhusudana and Suka Dev took to Bhakti after Realisation to enjoy the sweetness of loving relationship with God.

Knowledge or wisdom will dawn by itself when you practise Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti is the pleasant, smooth, direct road to God. Bhakti is sweet in the beginning, sweet in the middle and sweet in the end. It gives the highest, undecaying bliss.

Kindle love divine in thy heart, for this is the immediate way to the Kingdom of God.

Pray to the Lord. Sing His glory. Recite His Name. Become a channel of His grace.

Seek His will. Do His will. Surrender to His will. You will become one with the cosmic will.

Surrender unto the Lord. He will become your charioteer on the field of life. He will drive your chariot well. You will reach the destination, the Abode of Immortal Bliss.

4. JAPA YOGA

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

WHAT IS JAPA

Repetition of any Mantra or Name of the Lord is known as Japa. Japa is an important Anga of Yoga. It is a spiritual food for the hungry soul. Japa is the rod in the hands of the blind Sadhakas to plod on the road to Realisation. Japa is the philosopher's stone or divine elixir that makes one God-like. In this iron age, practice of Japa alone can give eternal Peace, Bliss and Immortality.

Japa is repetition of the Mantra. Dhyana is meditation on the form of the Lord with His attributes. There is meditation or Dhyana with Japa (Japa-Sahita-Dhyana); there is meditation or Dhyana without Japa (Japa-Rahita-Dhyana). In the beginning you should combine Dhyana with Japa. As you advance the Japa drops by itself; meditation only remains. It is an advanced stage. You can then practise concentration separately. You can do whatever you like best in this respect.

Name (*Nama*) and the object (*Rupa*) signified by the Name are inseparable. Thought and word are inseparable. Whenever you think of the name of your son, his figure stands before your mental eye, and vice versa. Even so when you do Japa of Rama, Krishna or Christ, the picture of Rama, Krishna or Christ will come before your mind. Therefore Japa and Dhyana go together. They are inseparable.

Do the Japa with feeling. Know the meaning of the Mantra. Feel God's presence in everything and everywhere. Draw closer and nearer to Him when you repeat the Japa. Think

He is shining in the chambers of your heart. He is witnessing your repetition of the Mantra as He is the witness of your mind.

MANTRA

‘*Mananat-trayate iti Mantrah*’ — By the *Manana* (constant thinking or recollection) of which one is protected or is released from the round of births and deaths, is Mantra. That is called Mantra by the meditation (*Manana*) on which the Jiva or the individual soul attains freedom from sin, enjoyment in heaven and final liberation, and by the aid of which it attains in full the fourfold fruit (*Chaturvarga*), i.e., *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksha*. A Mantra is so called because it is achieved by the mental process. The root ‘Man’ in the word *Mantra* comes from the first syllable of that word, meaning ‘to think’, and ‘Tra’ from ‘*Trai*’ meaning ‘to protect’ or ‘free’ from the bondage of Samsara or the phenomenal world. By the combination of ‘Man’ and ‘Tra’ comes *Mantra*.

A Mantra is divinity encased within a sound-structure. It is divine power or Daivi Sakti manifesting in a sound-body. The Mantra is itself Devata.

The sacred Mantra or the Divine Name is a vital symbol of the Supreme Divinity directly revealed in the innermost depths of divine communion to the sages of Self-realisation in the hoary Vedic and Upanishadic times. These symbols are in the nature of unfailing keys to gain access into the transcendental realms of absolute experience.

Mantra Yoga is an exact science. A Mantra, in the Hindu religion, has the following six parts. It has got a *Rishi* (a man of Self-realisation) to whom it was revealed for the first time and who gave this Mantra to the world. He is the *Drashta* or Seer for this Mantra. Sage Viswamitra is the Rishi for Gayatri. Secondly, the Mantra has a metre (*Chandas*), which governs the inflection of the voice. Thirdly, the Mantra has a particular

Devata or supernatural being, higher or lower, as its informing power. This Devata is the presiding deity of the Mantra. Fourthly, the Mantra has got a *Bija* or seed. The seed is a significant word, or series of words, which gives a special power to the Mantra. Fifthly, every Mantra has got a Sakti. The Sakti is the energy of the form of the Mantra, i.e. of the vibration-forms set up by its sounds. These carry the man to the Devata that is worshipped. Lastly, the Mantra has a *Kilaka* — pillar or pin. This plugs the Mantra-Chaitanya that is hidden in the Mantra. As soon as the plug is removed by constant and prolonged repetition of the Name, the Chaitanya that is hidden is revealed. The devotee gets Darshana of the Ishta Devata.

SOUND AND IMAGE

Sounds are vibrations. They give rise to definite forms. Each sound produces a form in the invisible world, and combinations of sound create complicated shapes.

The repetition of a Mantra has a mysterious power of bringing about the manifestation of the Divinity, just as the splitting of an atom manifests the tremendous forces latent in it. When a particular Mantra appropriated to a particular god is properly recited, the vibrations so set up create in the higher planes a special form which that god ensouls for the time being. The repetition of the Panchakshara Mantra — *Om Namah Sivaya* — produces the form of Lord Siva. The repetition of *Om Namo Narayanaya*, the Ashtakshara Mantra of Vishnu, produces the form of Vishnu.

GLORY OF DIVINE NAME

The Name of God, chanted correctly or incorrectly, knowingly or unknowingly, carefully or carelessly, is sure to give the desired result. Just as burning quality is natural to and inherent in fire, so also, the power of destroying sins with their very root and branch, and bringing into blissful union with the Lord through

Bhava-Samadhi, is natural to and inherent in the Name of God.

The glory of the Name of God cannot be established through reasoning and intellect. It can be experienced or realised only through devotion, faith and constant repetition of the Name.

There is a Sakti or power in every word. If you utter the word 'excreta' or 'urine' when your friend is taking his meals, he may at once vomit his food. If you think of 'Garam Pakoda', 'hot Pakoda', your tongue will get salivation. When anyone suddenly shouts 'Scorpion! Scorpion!', 'Snake! Snake!', you at once apprehend the scorpion or the snake and jump in fright. When anyone calls you a 'donkey' or an 'ass', you are annoyed and you show anger. If anyone says, "You are a nice person," you smile. When such is the power of the names of the ordinary things of this world, what tremendous power should there be in the Name of God! God is the completion or the fullness of existence. Hence, the Nrme which denotes Him, too, is full and perfect. Therefore, the power of the Name of God is incalculable, for it is the height or the zenith of power. The Name of God can achieve anything. There is nothing impossible for it. It is the means to the realisation of God Himself. Even as the name of a thing in this world generates the consciousness of that thing in the mind, the Name of God generates God-consciousness in the purified mind and becomes the direct cause of the realisation of the Highest Perfection or God.

VARIETIES OF JAPA

Repeat the Mantra verbally for sometime, in a whisper for sometime, and mentally for sometime. The mind wants variety. It gets disgusted with any monotonous practice. The mental repetition is very powerful. It is termed *Manasika Japa*. The verbal or loud repetition is called *Vaikhari Japa*. The loud Japa shuts out all worldly sounds. There is no break of Japa here. Repetition in a whisper or humming is termed *Upamshu Japa*.

Even mechanical repetition of Japa without any Bhava has a great purifying effect on the heart or the mind. The feeling will come later on when the process of mental purification goes on.

Write down daily in a notebook your Ishta Mantra or Guru Mantra for half an hour. When you write the Mantra, observe Mouna. Write the Mantra clearly in ink. On Sundays and holidays, write this for one hour. This is *Likhita Japa*. You can develop a wonderful power of concentration.

The benefits of Mantra-writing or Likhita Japa cannot be adequately described. Besides bringing about purity of heart and concentration of mind, Mantra-writing gives you control of Asana, control of Indriyas, particularly the sight and the tongue, and fills you with the power of endurance. You attain peace of mind quickly. By prolonged and constant practice the inherent power of the Mantra (Mantra-Sakti) will be awakened, which will fill your very existence with the Divinity of the Mantra.

In Mantra-writing, there is no restriction about any particular script. It may be written in any language. I give a specimen, for your guidance.



BENEFITS OF JAPA

Japa changes the mental substance from passion to purity, from Rajas to Sattva. It calms and strengthens the mind. It makes the mind introspective. It checks the outgoing tendencies of the mind. It eradicates all kinds of evil thoughts and inclinations. It induces determination and austerity. Eventually it leads to the direct Darshana of God, the Ishta Devata, or tutelary Deity, or to God-realisation.

The mind is purified by constant Japa and worship. It is filled with good and pure thoughts. Repetition of Mantra and worship strengthen the good Samskaras. "As a man thinks, so he becomes." This is the psychological law. The mind of a man who trains himself in thinking good holy thoughts, develops a tendency to think of good thoughts. His character is moulded and transformed by continued good thoughts. When the mind thinks of the image of the Lord during Japa and worship, the mental substance actually assumes the form of the image. The impression of the object is left in the mind. This is called Samskara. When the act is repeated very often, the Samskaras gain strength by repetition and a tendency or habit is formed in the mind. He who entertains thoughts of Divinity becomes transformed actually into the Divinity itself by constant thinking and meditation. His Bhava or disposition is purified and divinised. The meditator and the meditated, the worshipper and the worshipped, the thinker and the thought, become one and the same. This is *Samadhi*. This is the fruit of worship or Upasana or doing Japa.

O man! Take refuge in the Name. *Nami* and *Nama* are inseparable. Sing the Lord's Name incessantly. Remember the Name of the Lord with every incoming and outgoing breath. In this iron age *Nama-smarana* or Japa is the easiest, quickest, safest and surest way to reach God and attain Immortality and perennial Joy. Glory to the Lord! Glory to His Name.

5. SANKIRTAN YOGA (SWAMI SIVANANDA)

Sankirtan is the Svarupa of God. Dhvani is Sankirtan. Sankirtan is the essence of the Vedas. The four Vedas originate from sound. There are four kinds of sound, viz., *Vaikhari* (vocal), *Madhyama* (from the throat), *Pasyanti* (from the heart) and *Para* (from the navel). Sound originates from the navel. Vedas also originate from the navel. Sankirtan and Vedas are born from the same source.

People sit together and sing the names of the Lord with harmony and concord, and with Suddha or Divine Bhava. This is Sankirtan. Sankirtan is accompanied by the play of musical sounds as the word 'San' precedes 'kirtan.' Sankirtan is an exact science. It elevates the mind quickly and intensifies the Bhava or divine feeling to a maximum degree.

Nama and *Nami* are inseparable. *Nama* means Name (Name of God). *Nami* means 'that which is denoted by the *Nama* or Name'. *Nama* is greater than the *Nami*. Even in worldly experience the man dies but his name is remembered for a long time. Kalidasa, Valmiki, Tulsidas, etc., are remembered even today. *Nama* is nothing but Chaitanya. Sankirtan is singing God's name with Bhava, Prem or divine feeling.

Sankirtan Yoga is the easiest, quickest, safest, cheapest and best way for attaining God-realisation in this age. People cannot practise severe austerities now-a-days. They do not have the strength of will to practise Hatha Yoga. They cannot maintain perfect life-long Brahmacharya. They do not have the prerequisites for Raja Yoga. They are not endowed with the keen intellect necessary for Jnana Yoga or Vedantic Sadhana. But this Sankirtan Yoga or the Yoga of Singing Lord's Names is within the reach of all.

There is infinite Sakti or power in the Lord's Names. It will remove all impurities from your mind. Vedantins say that there are three kinds of obstacles to Self-realisation, — *Mala*, *Vikshepa* and *Avarana*. To remove them they prescribe Nishkamya Karma, Upasana and Vedantic Nididhyasana. This Sankirtan alone can achieve all these together. Sankirtan removes the impurities of the mind (*Mala*); it steadies the mind and checks its tendency to vacillate (*Vikshepa*); and ultimately it tears the veil of ignorance too (*Avarana*), and brings the Sadhaka face to face with God.

Maya is so powerful that she deludes you every moment. Every moment she makes you feel that there is pleasure only in the sense-objects and nowhere else. You mistake pain for pleasure. This is the work of Maya. Beware. Remember *Janma-mrityu-jara-vyadhi'duhkhada-dosha*, — this world is full of the pains of birth, death, old age, disease and misery. There is no pleasure in these finite objects. *Yo Vai Bhuma Tat Sukham*. You can have Bliss in the Infinite alone. Sankirtan will enable you to realise this Infinite here and now. Sankirtan will save you from Maya, from delusion. Therefore sing the Names of the Lord always.

Let us, therefore, sing the Maha Mantra:

Hare Rama Hare Rama

Rama Rama Hare Hare,

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna

Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

This is the great Mantra which is specially meant for' the people of Kali Yuga. Narada went to Lord Brahma and said: "O Lord, the people of Kali Yuga will not be able to practise austerities, nor to perform the Yajnas, nor to pursue the path of Vedanta. Kindly have mercy on them and tell me some easy way by which they can attain God." Lord Brahma in His Supreme

Compassion and Mercy gave this Maha Mantra by repeating which people of the Kali Yuga will attain Self-realisation. Therefore, sing the Lord's Names; serve, love, give, meditate, realise; be good and do good (this is the essence of all scriptures); be kind and be compassionate; enquire "Who am I?", know the Self and be free. May God bless you all with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Eternal bliss.

6. HATHA YOGA

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

'Health is wealth'. Good health is the greatest asset for you. Without good health you can hardly expect success in any walk of life. Even for spiritual pursuits, good health is the prerequisite,

Hatha Yoga is a Divine Blessing for attaining good health. Body and mind are instruments which the practice of Hatha Yoga keeps sound, strong and full of energy. It is a unique armour of defence to battle the opposing forces in the material and spiritual fields. By its practice you can annihilate *Adhi-Vyadhi* and attain radiant health and God-realisation.

Hatha Yoga means the Yoga or union between 'Ha' and 'Tha'. 'Ha' means the sun. 'Tha' means the moon. Prana is known by the name of the sun. Apana is known by the name of the moon. Therefore, Hatha Yoga is the union of the Prana and the Apana. Hatha Yoga prepares the student for Raja Yoga. It is only an auxiliary to Raja Yoga.

Hatha Yoga is a perfectly practical system of self-culture. You can attain harmonious development of your body, mind, intellect and soul by the practice of Yoga. It is an exact science. Hatha Yoga deals with a system of Yogic exercises of the Indian Rishis and Yogins of yore based on scientific principles. There is no vague doctrine here. It imparts to every practitioner definite practical knowledge, fine health, longevity, strength, vim and

vitality. You can acquire absolute control over the whole of nature by the practice of Yoga. It will help you to attain ethical perfection, perfect concentration of mind and unfold various psychic powers.

Shad-Kriyas (Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Nauli, Tratak and Kapalabhati), Asanas, Pranayama, Mudras, Bandhas and exercises in concentration and meditation, constitute Hatha Yoga, which leads to the awakening of the Kundalini Sakti and ultimate union with God in Samadhi. Shad-Kriyas are preliminary purificatory processes. Asanas pertain to the physical body and the nerve-centres. They render the body firm and steady, and eradicate physical ailments and inertia. Pranayama aims at the control of the vital breath. Bandhas pertain to the Prana. That which binds Prana is a Ban-dha. They do not allow the Prana to move upwards and the Apana to move downwards. They bind and unite the Prana with the Apana and send the united Prana-Apana along the Sushumna Nadi. Mudras concern the mind. They represent seals. Mudra means a seal. They seal the mind with the soul or Atman. They do not allow the mind to wander outside towards objects. They direct the externalising mind towards the Atman in the chambers of the heart and fix it there. A combination of these is essential.

Hatha Yoga itself is an indispensable part of Raja Yoga. The aim of Hatha Yoga is Raja Yoga, viz., Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Hatha Yoga is a great help to the practice of Raja Yoga. It removes Tamas (inertia) and Rajas (restlessness of the mind and the body). It gives one easy mastery over the turbulent senses. He who practises Asanas and Pranayama regularly will be very soon established in Yama-Niyama.

Asanas are a great help to the aspirant on the path of Raja Yoga. No one should neglect the practice of Hatha Yoga, be he a Raja Yogi, Vedantin or Bhakta.

7. RAJA YOGA (SWAMI SIVANANDA) THE PHILOSOPHY OF YOGA

It is said that the original propounder of classical Yoga was Hiranyagarbha Himself. It is Patanjali Maharshi who formulated this science into a definite system under the name of Ashtanga Yoga or Raja Yoga. This forms one of the Shad-Darsanas or Classical Systems of Philosophy. Vyasa has explained the original aphorisms or Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and this has been further elaborated through a gloss by a learned author named Vachaspati Mishra, and through the celebrated writings of Vijnana Bhikshu.

The Yoga, in allegiance to the Sankhya, holds that there is an eternal and omnipresent inert *Prakriti* and a plurality of omnipresent Conscious *Purusha*. The Yoga accepts a third principle, viz., Ishvara. The contact of the Purusha with Prakriti makes the latter evolve itself into its various effects. The Purusha, due to *Aviveka*, feels that it is an individual on account of its identification with Prakriti and its modifications.

The Yoga concerns itself with the method of freeing the Purusha from this bondage through right effort. Yoga is, thus, more a practical way of attainment than a philosophical excursion into the realms of the Spirit. As a Darsana, it is Sa-Ishvara Sankhya, i.e., it sanctions the twenty-five Tattvas of the Sankhya and adds one more, Ishvara. In doing so, Yoga fulfills its own characteristic of being an utterly practical system of Sadhana. When covered over by the veil of ignorance (*Aviveka*), the Purusha imagines that He is imperfect, incomplete, and that fulfilment can be had only in His conjunction with Prakriti. The Purusha then, so to say, begins to gaze at Prakriti; and in the light of His Consciousness, the inert Prakriti commences its kaleidoscopic display of objects. The Purusha, due to Prakriti-

Samyoga, appears to desire for enjoyment of these objects. He acts, as it were. He seems to grasp the objects. Now bondage, though not essential to the Purusha, is complete and the vicious circle is kept up. Transmigration of the individual is the consequence of Aviveka and its effects. Yoga by its scientific processes cuts these three knots one by one and leads to Kaivalya Moksha which is the realisation of the true nature of the Purusha as independent of Prakriti and its evolutes.

Deep within everyone there is an abiding faith in a Supreme Being, someone to whom a Sadhaka can look up for help and guidance, for protection and inspiration. But the ego does not allow this to happen. Disentanglement of the Purusha from the ego alone can lead to Its release from the snares of Prakriti. The ego can hardly be subdued by subjective analysis only; but it is easy to discriminate this ego as separate from the Purusha when it is voluntarily offered as a sacrifice at the altar of self-surrender to a Supreme Being, *Ishvarapranidhana*. This is the hypothesis of the Yoga, in addition to its exhortation to put forth effort (Sadhana-Marga).

YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI

Raja Yoga, is the king of all Yogas. It concerns directly with the mind. In this Yoga there is no struggling with Prana or physical body. There are no Hatha Yogic Kriyas. The Yogi sits at ease, watches his mind and silences the bubbling thoughts. He stills the mind, restrains the thought waves and enters into the thoughtless state or Asamprajnata Samadhi. Hence the name Raja Yoga, Though Raja Yoga is a dualistic philosophy and treats of Prakriti and Purusha, it helps the student in Advaitic Realisation of oneness eventually. Though there is the mention of Purusha, ultimately the Purusha becomes identical with the Highest Self or Purusha, or Brhman of Upanishads. Raja Yoga pushes the student to the highest rung of the spiritual ladder of Advaitic realisation of Brahman.

Patanjali's Yoga system is written in Sutras. A 'Sutra' is a terse verse. It is an aphoristic saying. It is pregnant with deep, hidden significance. Rishis of yore have expressed philosophical ideas and their realisation in the form of Sutras only. It is very difficult to understand the meaning of the Sutras without the help of a commentary, a gloss or a teacher who is well-versed in Yoga. A Yogi with full realisation can explain the Sutras beautifully. Literally, Sutra means a thread. Just as various kinds of flowers with different colours are nicely arranged in a string, to make a garland, just as rows of pearls are beautifully arranged in a string to form a necklace, so also Yogic ideas are well-arranged in Sutras. They are arranged into Chapters.

The First Chapter is Samadhi-pada. It deals with different kinds of Samadhi. It contains 51 Sutras. Obstacles in meditation, five kinds of Vritti and their control, three kinds of Vairagya, nature of Ishvara, various methods to enter into Samadhi and the way to acquire peace of mind by developing virtues are described here.

The Second Chapter is Sadhana-pada. It contains 55 Sutras. It treats of Kriya Yoga, viz., *Tapas*, study and self-surrender to God, the five Kleshas or afflictions, the methods to destroy these afflictions which stand in the way of getting Samadhi, Yama and Niyama and their fruits, practice of Asana and its benefits, Pratyahara and its advantage, etc.

The Third Chapter is Vibhuti-pada. It contains 56 Sutras. It treats of Dharana, Dhyana and various kinds of Samyama on external objects, mind, internal Chakras and on several objects, to acquire various Siddhis.

The Fourth Chapter is Kaivalya-pada or Independence. It contains 34 Sutras. It treats of the Independence of a full-blown Yogi who has perfect discrimination between Prakriti and Purusha, and who has separated himself from the three Gunas. It also deals with mind and its nature. Dharmamegha Samadhi also is described here.

STATES OF THE MIND

Raja Yoga is mainly concerned with the mind, its modifications and its control. There are five states of the mind — *Kshipta, Mudha, Vikshipta, Ekagra* and *Niruddha*. Usually the mind is running in various directions; its rays are scattered. This is the *Kshipta* state. Sometimes it is self-forgetful, it is full of foolishness (*Mudha*). When you try to practise concentration, the mind seems to get concentrated but gets distracted often. This is *Vikshipta*. But with prolonged and repeated practice of concentration again and again, and repeating Lord's Name, it becomes one-pointed. This is called the *Ekagra* state. Later on, it is fully controlled (*Niruddha*). It is ready to be dissolved in the Supreme Purusha, when you get *Asamprajnata Samadhi*.

To have peace of mind, you will have to cultivate the four great virtues — *Maitri, Karuna, Mudita* and *Upeksha*. *Maitri* (friendliness) you should have towards equals. You should have *Karuna* (compassion) for those who are in distress. You should have *Mudita* (complacency) towards those who are superior to you. Complacency will destroy jealousy. All are your brothers. If a man is placed in a better position, feel happy over it. When you come across wicked people, be indifferent to them. This is *Upeksha* (indifference). By these methods, you will have peace of mind.

AFFLICTIONS

The five kinds of afflictions are: *Avidya* (ignorance), *Asmita* (egoism), *Raga* (attraction), *Dvesha* (aversion) and *Abhinivesha* (clinging to mundane life). *Samadhi* destroys all this. *Raga* and *Dvesha* have five states — *Udara* (fully manifest), *Vicchinna* (hidden), *Tanu* (thinned out), *Prasupta* (dormant) and *Dagdha* (burnt). In worldly-minded people who are sunk in worldliness, *Raga* and *Dvesha* assume an *Udara Avastha*; they are in an expanded state i.e., they have a full and unhampered

play. *Vicchinna Avastha* is that state in which *Raga* and *Dvesha* are hidden. The husband and wife sometimes quarrel; then love is temporarily hidden. Again she smiles; then love comes back. This is *Vicchinna Avastha*. Some people do a little bit of *Pranayama, Kirtan* and *Japa*. In them *Raga* and *Dvesha* become thinned out (*Tanu Avastha*). Sometimes, on account of unsuitable conditions, they lie dormant (*Prasupta Avastha*). In *Samadhi* they are burnt — *Dagdha*. *Raga* and *Dvesha* constitute this *Samsara*. They constitute the mind. Mind is a force which has no real entity but appears to be for the time being, and deludes the *Jivas*. It is superior to *Prana*. It is superior to matter. But, above the mind there is discrimination. Discrimination can control the mind; enquiry into your real nature or *Atma-Vichara* can control the mind. If you destroy the *Raga-Dvesha* through meditation and *Samadhi*, the mind will be annihilated. Your effort should be daily to practise concentration, even for five or ten minutes; then you will be able to control the mind and enter into *Samadhi*.

OBSTACLES IN MEDITATION

There are several obstacles to meditation. Vedanta describes the obstacles to be *Laya, Vikshepa, Kashaya* and *Rasasvada*. Patanjali says: "Disease, dullness, doubt, carelessness, laziness, worldly-mindedness, illusion, missing the point, instability — these are the obstacles in *Yoga*." Grief, melancholy, tremor of the body, inhalation and exhalation are the auxiliaries to these main obstacles. You will have to remove all these obstacles. During meditation, if you are overpowered by sleep, stand up, dash cold water on the face, practise a few *Asanas* and *Pranayama*. Sleep will go. Another age-old practice is, for those who have a '*choti*' (tuft of hair), to tie the tuft to a nail of the wall by means of a thread — if you doze during meditation, the nail on the wall will pull you up. Take light food at night. *Abhyasa* and *Vairagya* are the best means of avoiding

all obstacles. Vairagya is not running away from the world. Vairagya is a mental state. Analyse your thoughts. Scrutinise your motives. Give up the objects that your mind likes most, atleast for some time. When the craving for them has vanished, then you can take them, as a master.

THREE CLASSES OF ASPIRANTS

Raja Yoga is the royal road to freedom from misery. It treats of the four great principles: misery, its cause, freedom from misery and the means. The practice of the methods prescribed in Raja Yoga leads to the cessation of all miseries and the attainment of eternal bliss. Practise from today. Never miss a day. Remember each day brings you nearer to the end of this earthly existence as a human being. You have wasted many days, many months and many years. You do not realise it because you have drunk deep the liquor of Moha. Therefore, you do not understand the real cause of the miseries of this earthly life.

The cause of this misery is *Avidya*. When the sun of discrimination arises within, the Purusha realises that He is distinct from Prakriti, that He is independent and unaffected. Raja Yoga gives you a most practical method of bringing about this exalted state.

According to Raja Yoga, there are three types of aspirants — *Uttama, Madhyama* and *Adhama Adhikaris*. To three classes of aspirants Raja Yoga prescribes three kinds of Sadhana. To the *Uttama Adhikari* (first-class aspirant) Raja Yoga prescribes *Abhyasa* and *Vairagya*. He practises meditation on the Self; he practises Chitta-Vritti-Nirodha, and soon enters into *Samadhi*. This is practice (*Abhyasa*) sustained by *Vairagya*. To the *Madhyama Adhikari* (middling aspirant) Raja Yoga prescribes the *Kriya Yoga* — *Tapas, Svadhyaya* and *Ishvarapranidhana*. *Tapas* is austerity. Egolessness and selfless service are the greatest forms of *Tapas*. Humility and desirelessness are the greatest forms

of austerity. Practise these through ceaseless, untiring, selfless service. Practise the three kinds of *Tapas* mentioned in the Gita. Disciplinary practices like fasting, etc., also come under *Tapas*. *Svadhyaya* is study of spiritual literature and also *Japa* of your *Ishta Mantra*. *Ishvarapranidhana* is self-surrender to the Lord and doing all actions as *Ishvararpana*, as offering unto the Lord. These three form the *Sadhanas* of the *Madhyama Adhikari* who enters into deep meditation very soon and attains *Kaivalya Moksha*. To the *Adhama Adhikari*, lowest kind of aspirant, Raja Yoga prescribes *Ashtanga Yoga* or the eightfold *Sadhanas* — *Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana* and *Samadhi*.

ASHTANGA YOGA

Patanjali's Raja Yoga is generally termed the *Ashtanga Yoga* or the *Yoga of Eight Limbs*, through the practice of which Freedom is achieved. These eight limbs are: (1) *Yama* or Eternal Vows — *Ahimsa* (non-violence), *Satya* (truth), *Asteya* (non-stealing), *Brahmacharya* (continence) and *Aparigraha* (non-avariciousness); (2) *Niyama* or Observances — *Saucha* (purity), *Santosha* (contentment), *Tapas* (austerities), *Svadhyaya* (study of scriptures) and *Ishvarapranidhana* (surrender to God); (3) *Asana* (firm, comfortable meditative posture); (4) *Pranayama* (the regulation of the Vital Force); (5) *Pratyahara* (abstraction of the senses and mind from objects); (6) *Dharana* (concentration); (7) *Dhyana* (meditation); and (8) *Samadhi* (superconscious state or trance). These eight limbs have been scientifically arranged and dealt with. They are the natural steps in the ladder which takes man from his human to the real divine nature. From the gross to the subtle, all the chords that bind the Purusha to Prakriti are cut asunder. This snapping of the ties releases the Purusha to enjoy his Independence, *Kaivalya Moksha*. This is the goal of Raja Yoga.

Yama and Niyama purify the individual's actions and make them more Sattvic. Tamas and Rajas which are the pillars of Samsara are pulled down through the practice of the Ten Canons of Yama and Niyama. Inner purity is increased. The individual's nature itself is made Sattvic, Asana gives the individual control over the Rajasic impulses; and at the same time it forms the foundation of the grand structure of Antaranga Sadhana, or the Inner Yoga-process. Pranayama brings the aspirant face to face with the Life-Principle. Control of this Life-Principle gives him an insight into its motive force. He is made aware of the fact that it is desire that sustains the life-force. Desire is the cause of the externalisation of the mind. Desire is the bed of Vrittis. Vrittis together form the mind, and it is the mind that links the Purusha with Prakriti. The mind or the Chitta is the subtlest form of Prakriti's manifestations. If mind is to be destroyed, Vrittis are to be eradicated. If Vrittis are to be eradicated, desire is to be rooted out. The Yogi then rapidly withdraws all the rays of the mind from their external propulsion (Pratyahara). To find the root of the mind, the Seed-Desire, he needs the light of the whole mind. At the same time, prevention of the externalisation of the mind breaks the vicious circle, as desire is deprived of its active manifestation. This concentrated beam of light is then directed towards the root of the mind itself (Dharana); and mind is held in check. Now the consciousness which had so long been flowing outward collects itself and flows back into its source — the Purusha within, which is Dhyana. The link with Prakriti is gone. The Purusha experiences the transcendental state of independence — Kaivalya — in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Now ignorance is destroyed. The Purusha realises that it was only His consciousness that gave Prakriti its power to please Him, to give Him joy, to delude Him, and to bind Him. He enjoys the bliss of His own nature and remains for ever independent and blissful. All thought ceases once for all in Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

The seeds of Desire and of Vasanas and Samskaras are fried in toto; this is Nirbija Samadhi. The Yogi in this supreme state loses all external consciousness, all awareness of duality and multiplicity; he loses even the I-idea (Asmita) in Asamprajnata Samadhi. That is the Supreme State where the Seer (Purusha) is established in His own Svaroopa.

Do not imagine that you are an Uttama Adhikari and that you have only to sit in meditation and enter into Samadhi. You will have a terrible downfall. Even after years of practice you will find you have not progressed an inch forward, because there are deep within you lurking desires and cravings, evil Vrittis which are far beyond your reach. Be humble. Make a searching analysis of your heart and mind. Even if you are really a first-class aspirant, think you are an aspirant of the lowest class and practise the eightfold Sadhana prescribed by Raja Yoga. The more time you spend in the first two steps, viz., Yama and Niyama, the less will be the time needed to attain perfection in meditation. It is the preparation that takes very long. But do not wait for perfection in Yama and Niya-ma, in order to take up the higher practices of Asana, Pranayama and meditation. Try to get established in Yama and Niyama, and at the same time practise Asana, Pranayama and meditation as much as you can. The two must go hand in hand. Then success will be rapid. You will soon enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi and attain Kaivalya Moksha. What that supreme state is no one has expressed, and no words can describe. Practise, O bold aspirant, and realise it for yourself. May you shine as a Yogi in this very birth!

8. JNANA YOGA

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

INTRODUCTION

Jnana is knowledge. To know Brahman as one's own Self is Jnana. To say, "I am Brahman, the pure, all-pervading

Consciousness, the non-enjoyer, non-doer and silent witness,” is Jnana. To behold the one Self everywhere is Jnana.

Ajnana is ignorance. To identify oneself with the illusory vehicles of body, mind. Prana and the senses is Ajnana. To say, “I am the doer, the enjoyer, I am a Brahmin, a Brahmachari, this is mine, he is my son,” is Ajnana. Jnana alone can destroy Ajnana, even as light alone can remove darkness.

Brahman, the Supreme Self, is neither the doer of actions nor the enjoyer of the fruit of actions. The creation, preservation and destruction of the world are not due to Him. They are due to the action of *Maya*, the Lord’s energy manifesting itself as the world-process.

Just as space appears to be of three kinds — absolute space, space limited by a jar, and space reflected in the water of a jar, — so also there are three kinds of intelligence. They are absolute intelligence, intelligence reflected in *Maya*, and intelligence reflected in the *Jiva* (the individual soul). The notion of the doer is the function of intelligence as reflected in the intellect. This, together with the notion of *Jiva*, is superimposed by the ignorant on the pure and limitless Brahman, the silent witness.

The illustration of space absolute, space limited by a jar and space reflected in water of a jar, is given to convey the idea that in reality Brahman alone is. Because of *Maya*, however, It appears as three.

The notion that the reflection of intelligence is real, is erroneous, and is due to ignorance. Brahman is without limitations; limitation is a superimposition on Brahman.

The identity of the Supreme Self and the *Jiva* or reflected self is established through the statement of the Upanishad ‘*Tat Twam Asi*’ — ‘That Thou Art’. When the knowledge of the identity of the two arises, then world problems and ignorance,

with all their offshoots, are destroyed and all doubts disappear.

Self-realisation or direct intuitive perception of the Supreme Self is necessary for attaining freedom and perfection. This Jnana Yoga or the path of Wisdom is, however, not meant for the masses whose hearts are not pure enough and whose intellects are not sharp enough to understand and practise this razor-edge path. Hence, Karma Yoga and Upasana (Bhakti) are to be practised first, which will render the heart pure and make it fit for the reception of Knowledge.

BRAHMAN AND MAYA

Brahman is *Sat*, the Absolute, Reality. That which exists in the past, present and future; which has no beginning, middle and end; which is unchanging and not conditioned by time, space and causation; which exists during the waking, dream and deep sleep states; which is of the nature of one homogeneous essence, is *Sat*. This is found in Brahman, the Absolute. The scriptures emphatically declare: “Only *Sat* was prior to the evolution of this universe.”

This phenomenal universe is unreal. Isvara created this universe out of His own body (*Maya*), just as a spider creates a web from its own saliva. It is merely an appearance, like a snake in a rope or like silver in mother-of-pearl. It has no independent existence.

It is difficult to conceive how the Infinite comes out of Itself and becomes the finite. The magician can bring forth a rabbit out of a hat. We see it happening but we cannot explain it; so we call it *Maya* or illusion.

Maya is a strange phenomenon which cannot be accounted for by any law of Nature. It is incapable of being described. Its relation to Brahman is like that of heat to fire. The heat of fire is neither one with it nor different from it.

Does Maya really exist or not? The Advaitin gives this reply: "This inscrutable Maya cannot be said either to exist or not to exist".

If we know the nature of Brahman, then all names, forms and limitations fall away. The world is Maya because it is not the essential truth of the infinite Reality-Brahman. Somehow the world exists and its relation to Brahman is indescribable. The illusion vanishes through the attainment of knowledge of Brahman. Sages, Rishis and scriptures declare that Maya vanishes entirely as soon as knowledge of the Supreme Self dawns.

Brahman alone really exists. The Jiva, the world and this little "I" are false. Rise above names and forms and kill the false egoism. Go beyond Maya and annihilate ignorance. Constantly meditate on the Supreme Brahman, your divine nature.

The world is unreal when compared to Brahman. It is a solid reality to a worldly and passionate man only. To a realised sage it exists like a burnt cloth. To a Videhamukta (disembodied sage) it does not exist at all. To a man of discrimination it loses its charm and attraction.

Do not leave the world to enter a forest because you now read that the world is unreal. You will be utterly ruined if you do this without proper qualifications. Be first established in the conviction that the world is unreal and Brahman alone is real. This will help you to develop dispassion and a strong yearning for liberation. Stay in the world but be not worldly; strive for liberation by the practice of Sadhana Chatushtaya.

SADHANA CHATUSHTAYA

Jnana Yoga or Brahma Vidya or the science of the Self is not a subject that can be understood and realised through mere intellectual study, reasoning, ratiocination, discussions or arguments. It is the most difficult of all sciences.

A student who treads the path of Truth must, therefore, first equip himself with Sadhana Chatushtaya—the "four means of salvation". They are discrimination, dispassion, the sixfold qualities of perfection, and intense longing for liberation,—*Viveka, Vairagya, Shad-Sampat and Mumukshutva*. Then alone will he be able to march forward fearlessly on the path. Not an iota of spiritual progress is possible unless one is endowed with these four qualifications.

These four means are as old as the *Vedas* and this world itself. Every religion prescribes them; the names differ from path to path but this is immaterial. Only ignorant people have the undesirable habit of practising lingual warfare and raising unnecessary questions. Pay no attention to them. It is your duty to try to eat the fruit instead of wasting time in counting the leaves of the tree. Try now to understand these four essential requisites for salvation.

Viveka is discrimination between the real and the unreal, between the permanent and the impermanent, between the Self and the non-Self. *Viveka* dawns in a man through the Grace of God. The Grace can come only after one has done unceasing selfless service in countless births with the feeling that he is an instrument of the Lord and that the work is an offering to the Lord. The door to the higher mind is flung open when there is an awakening of discrimination.

There is an eternal, changeless principle amidst the ever-changing phenomena of this vast universe and the fleeting movements and oscillations of the mind.

The aspirant should separate himself also from the six waves of the ocean of Samsara — birth and death, hunger and thirst, and exhilaration and grief. Birth and death belong to the physical body; hunger and thirst belong to Prana; exhilaration and grief are the attributes of the mind. The Soul is unattached.

The six waves cannot touch Brahman which is as subtle as the all-pervading ether.

Association with saints and study of Vedantic literature will infuse discrimination in man. Viveka should be developed to the maximum degree. One should be well established in it.

Vairagya is dispassion for the pleasures of this world and of heaven. The Vairagya that is born of Viveka is enduring and lasting. It will not fail the aspirant. But the Vairagya that comes temporarily to a woman when she gives birth to a child or when one attends a funeral at a crematorium, is of no use. The view that everything in the world is unreal causes indifference to the enjoyments of this world and the heaven-world also. One has to return from heaven to this plane of existence when the fruits of good works are all exhausted. Hence they are not worth striving for.

Vairagya does not mean abandoning one's social duties and responsibilities of life. It does not mean abandoning the world, nor life in a solitary cave of the Himalayas. Vairagya is mental detachment from all worldly objects. One may remain in the world and discharge all duties with detachment. He may be a householder with a large family, yet at the same time he may have perfect mental detachment from everything. He can do spiritual Sadhana amidst his worldly activities. He who has perfect mental detachment in the world is a hero indeed. He is better than a Sadhu living in a Himalayan cave, for the former has to face innumerable temptations every moment of his life.

The third requisite is *Shad-Sampat*, the sixfold virtue. It consists of *Sama*, *Dama*, *Uparati*, *Titiksha*, *Sraddha* and *Samadhana*. All these six qualities are taken as one because they are calculated to bring about mental control and discipline, without which concentration and meditation are impossible.

1. *Sama* is serenity or tranquillity of mind which is brought about through the eradication of desires.

2. *Dama* is rational control of the senses.
3. *Uparati* is satiety; it is resolutely turning the mind away from desire for sensual enjoyment. This state of mind comes naturally when one has practised Viveka, Vairagya, Sama and Dama.
4. *Titiksha* is the power of endurance. An aspirant should patiently bear the pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, etc.
5. *Sraddha* is intense faith in the words of the Guru, in Vedantic scriptures and, above all, in one's own self. It is not blind faith but is based on accurate reasoning, evidence and experience. As such, it is lasting, perfect and unshakable. Such a faith is capable of achieving anything.
6. *Samadhana* is fixing the mind on Brahman or the Self, without allowing it to run towards objects. The mind is free from anxiety amid pains and troubles. There is stability, mental poise and indifference amid pleasures. The aspirant has neither likes nor dislikes. He has great inner strength and enjoys unruffled peace of mind, due to the practices of Sama, Dama, Uparati, Titiksha and Sraddha.

Mumukshutva is intense desire for liberation or deliverance from the wheel of births and deaths with its concomitant evils of old age, disease, delusion and sorrow. If one is equipped with the previous three qualifications (Viveka, Vairagya and Shad-Sampat), then the intense desire for liberation will come without any difficulty. The mind moves towards the Source of its own accord when it has lost its charm for external objects. When purification of mind and mental discipline are achieved, the longing for liberation dawns by itself.

The aspirant who is endowed with all these four qualifications should then approach the Guru who will instruct

him on the knowledge of his real nature. The Guru is one who has a thorough knowledge of the scriptures and is also established in that knowledge in direct experience. He should then reflect and meditate on the inner Self and strive earnestly to attain the goal of Self-realisation.

A Sadhaka should reflect and meditate. *Sravana* is hearing of *Srutis*, *Manama* is thinking and reflecting, *Nididhyasana* is constant and profound meditation. Then comes *Atma-Sakshatkara* or direct realisation.

THE SEVEN STAGES OF JNANA

There are seven stages of Jnana or the seven *Jnana Bhumikas*. First, Jnana should be developed through a deep study of Atma Jnana Sastras and association with the wise and the performance of virtuous actions without any expectation of fruits. This is *Subhechcha* or good desire, which forms the first Bhumika or stage of Jnana. This will irrigate the mind with the waters of discrimination and protect it. There will be non-attraction or indifference to sensual objects in this stage. The first stage is the substratum of the other stages. From it the next two stages, viz., *Vicharana* and *Tanumanasi* will be reached. Constant Atma Vichara (Atmic enquiry) forms the second stage. The third stage is *Tanumanasi*, This is attained through the cultivation of special indifference to objects. The mind becomes thin like a thread. Hence the name *Tanumanasi*. *Tanu* means thread—thread-like state of mind. The third stage is also known by the name *Asanga Bhavana*. In the third stage, the aspirant is free from all attractions. If any one dies in the third stage, he will remain in heaven for a long time and will reincarnate on earth again as a Jnani. The above three stages can be included under the Jagrat state. The fourth stage is *Sattvapatti*. This stage will destroy all Vasanas to the root. This can be included under the Svapna state. The world appears like a dream. Those who have

reached the fourth stage will look upon all things of the universe with an equal eye. The fifth stage is *Asamsakti*. There is perfect non-attachment to the objects of the world. There is no *Upadhi* or waking or sleeping in this stage. This is the Jivanmukti stage in which there is the experience of Ananda Svaroopa (the Eternal Bliss of Brahman) replete with spotless Jnana. This will come under *Sushupti*. The sixth stage is *Padartha Bhavana*. There is knowledge of Truth. The seventh stage is *Turiya*, or the state of superconsciousness. This is Moksha. This is also known by the name *Turiyatita*. There are no Sankalpas. All the Gunas disappear. This is above the reach of mind and speech. Disembodied salvation (Videhamukti) is attained in the seventh stage.

Remaining in the certitude of Atma, without desires, and with an equal vision over all, having completely eradicated all complications of differentiations of 'I' or 'he', existence or non-existence, is *Turiya*.

PRACTICAL HINTS

Purify the Chitta by doing Nishkama Karma for twelve years. The effect of Chitta Suddhi is the attainment of Viveka and Vairagya. Acquire the four qualifications (Sadhana Chatushtaya), — Viveka, Vairagya, Shad Sampat and Mumukshutva. Then approach a Guru. Have Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana. Study carefully and constantly the twelve classical Upanishads and Yoga Vasishtha. Have a comprehensive and thorough understanding of the Lakshyartha or indicative (real) meaning of the Maha-Vakya 'Tat Tvam Asi'. Then, constantly reflect over this real meaning throughout the twenty-four hours. This is Brahma-Chintana or Brahma-Vichara. Do not allow any worldly thoughts to enter the mind. Vedantic realisation comes not through mere reasoning but through constant Nididhyasana, like the analogy of Bhramarakita Nyaya (caterpillar and wasp).

You get *Tadakara, Tadrupa, Tan-maya, Tadiyata, Talleenata* (Oneness, identity).

Generate the Brahmakara Vritti from your Sattvic Antahkarana through the influence of reflection on the real meaning of the Maha-Vakyas, 'Aham Brahma Asmi' or 'Tat Tvam Asi'. When you try to feel that you are infinity, this Brahmakara Vritti is produced. This Vritti destroys Avidya, induces Brahma Jnana and dies by itself eventually, like Nirmal seed which removes sediment in the water and itself settles down along with the mud and other dirty matter.

Retire into your meditation chamber. Sit on Padma, Siddha, Svastika or Sukha Asana to begin with. Relax the muscles. Close the eyes. Concentrate on or gaze at the Trikute, the space between the two eyebrows. Repeat 'Om' mentally with Brahma-Bhavana. This Bhavana is a *sine qua non*, very very important. Silence the conscious mind. Repeat mentally, feel constantly :

All-pervading ocean of	
Light I am	OM OM OM
Infinity I am	OM OM OM
All-pervading infinite	
Light I am	OM OM OM
Vyapaka Paripoorna Jyotir maya	
Brahman I am	OM OM OM
Omnipotent I am	OM OM OM
Omniscient I am	OM OM OM
All Bliss I am	OM OM OM
Satchidananda I am	OM OM OM
All purity I am	OM OM OM
All glory I am	OM OM OM

All *Upadhis* (limiting adjuncts such as body, mind, etc.,) will be sublated. All *Granthis* (knots of the heart, viz., *Avidya, Kama* and *Karma* — ignorance, desire and action) will be cut asunder. The thin veil, *Avarana*, will be pierced. The *Pancha Kosha Adhyasa* (superimposition) will be removed. You will rest doubtless in Satchidananda state. You will get highest Knowledge, highest Bliss, highest Realisation and highest end of life. 'Brahma Vit Brahmaiva Bhavati'. You will become Suddha Satchidananda Vyapaka Paripoorna Brahman. 'Nasti Atra Samsayah, there is no doubt of that.

There is no difficulty at all in Atma-Darshan, in Self-Realisation. You can have this within the twinkling of an eye as Raja Janaka had, before you can squeeze a flower with fingers, within the time taken for a grain to fall when rolled over a pot. You must do earnest, constant and intense practice. You are bound to succeed in two or three years.

Now-a-days there are plenty of 'Talking Brahman'. No flowery talk or verbosity can make a man Brahman. It is constant, intense, earnest Sadhana and Sadhana alone that can give a man direct Aparoksha Brahmic realisation (Svanubhava or Sakshatkara) wherein he sees Brahman just as he sees the solid white wall in front of him and feels Brahman, just as he feels the table behind him. Practise, practise, practise and become established in Brahman.

9. NADA YOGA

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

Nada is sound. Brahman willed. There was a Sat-Sankalpa. A vibration or Spandana arose. There was vibration of Om. This is Nada.

The mind is fixed on Nada, or Anahata sounds are heard in the ear. It gets Laya or dissolution. The Yogi enters into

Samadhi and attains Knowledge of the Self. This is Nada Yoga.

Nada Yoga is also called Laya Yoga. Kundalini Yoga is also called Laya Yoga.

Mind is naturally attracted by sweet sounds. It is entrapped by the sweet sounds, just as a deer is entrapped by sweet music.

Sit in Padmasana or Siddhasana or Sukhasana. Close the ears with the thumbs. This is Shanmukhi Mudra or Vaishnavi Mudra. Hear the Music of the Anahata sounds. Now you will have wonderful concentration.

Do Japa (Ajapa Japa) of Soham with breath or do Japa of any Mantra. Practise Pranayama for one or two months. You will hear the ten sounds (like that of Chini, Chini-Chini, bell, conch, lute, cymbals, flute, drum, Mridanga' and thunder) clearly and enjoy the music of the soul.

Abandon all worldly thoughts. Control your passions. Become indifferent to all objects. Practise Yama (self-restraint) or Sadachara (right conduct). Concentrate your attention on the Anahata sound which annihilates the mind. When the mind gets absorbed in the Anahata sound, you will attain knowledge of hidden things. You will hear Para-Vak. You will develop the eye of intuition. Eventually the mind is absorbed in Brahman or the Absolute.

Life is a ceaseless striving after non-ending unalloyed bliss, eternal, immortal, perennial Bliss. Scriptures, Sages and Saints have voiced it forth ever since the dawn of creation that Supreme Bliss can and should be had in one's *own* Self. Thus Self-realisation. Self-awareness or Self-Experience-Whole, Aparokshanubhuti is the *summum bonum* of human existence. That alone will bring to an end all your pains, and miseries. But, how are we to attain that?

Atmachaitanya Samadhi or Aparoksha Jnana is possible only when the mind becomes pure and Sattvic. Purity of mind can be had only when the little 'I', egoism or Ahamkara, is curbed, annihilated. It means that I-ness and mine-ness have got to be abandoned. In turn, that involves purity and control of the Indriyas or senses. Unless the mind is cultured and controlled, the Indriyas cannot be controlled. Thus, in a circular way, we come again to the mind. Rightly did the Sages exclaim: *Mana eva manushyanam karanam bandha-mokshayoh* —Mind alone is the cause for men's release and bondage.

Prana and mind are interdependent in their functional abilities. As long as one remains uncontrolled, the other cannot be controlled. If one is under control, the other, too, comes under control of its own accord. It is not enough if they are simply controlled. As long as they are not annihilated, Vasanas will not leave you. Unless Vasanas are destroyed Chitta cannot be destroyed. The destruction of Chitta alone can lead you to Jnana.

There are two courses. Firstly, to bring the Prana under control through various arduous Yogic processes, and then to control the mind and withdraw it from external objects and fix it on the Self. Secondly, to annihilate the mind through effecting Mano-Laya by finding such a higher powerful principle towards which the mind will naturally run and into which it will merge itself thus entering into a state of Laya. The Sages found that Mano-Laya followed by Mano-Nasa was a safer means to attain Self-realisation than the arduous process of controlling the mind and culturing it which is always attended by the danger of the mind jumping into the old grooves of Vasanas at any moment.

In the course of further practical investigations the Sages and Seers found that *Sound* had the power to attract the mind and absorb it, so to say.

Thus Mano-Laya and Mano-Nasa through Nada Yoga

(union or merger into Sound) was found to be an effective and safe means to Self-realisation.

10. LAMBIKA YOGA (SWAMI SIVANANDA)

Practice of Khechari Mudra is Lambika Yoga. The technique of the Mudra is explained below. He who practises this Mudra will have neither hunger nor thirst. He can walk in the sky. This Yoga is beset with difficulties.

This is a very difficult Yoga. It has to be learnt under a developed Yogi Guru who has practised this Yoga for a long time and attained full success.

It is kept secret by Yogis. It confers great Siddhis or powers. It is a great help to control the mind.

He who has attained success in this Mudra, will have neither hunger nor thirst. He can control his Prana quite easily.

Khechari Mudra, Yoni Mudra or Shan-mukhi Mudra, Sambhavi Mudra, Aswini Mudra, Maha Mudra and Yoga Mudra are the important Mudras. Among these Mudras, Khechari Mudra is the foremost. It is the king of the Mudras.

Mudra means a seal. It puts a seal to the mind and Prana. Mind and Prana come under the control of a Yogi.

Khechari Mudra consists of two important Kriyas, viz., Chedan and Dohan.

The lower part of the front portion of the tongue, the *frenum linguae* is cut to the extent of a hair's breadth with a sharp knife once in a week. Afterwards powder of turmeric is dusted over it. This is continued for some months. This is Chedan.

Afterwards the Yogic student applies butter to the tongue and lengthens it daily. He draws the tongue in such a way that it is similar to the process of milking the udder of a cow. This is

Dohan.

When the tongue is sufficiently long (it should touch the tip of the nose), the student folds it, takes it back and closes the posterior portion of the nostrils. Now he sits and meditates. The breath stops completely.

For some the cutting and the lengthening of the tongue is not necessary. They are born with a long tongue.

He who has attained perfection in this Mudra becomes a walker in the sky. Queen Chudalai had this Siddhi or power.

The Mudra helps the Yogi to get himself buried underneath the earth.

He who has purity and other divine virtues, who is free from desire, greed and lust, who is endowed with dispassion, discrimination and strong aspiration or longing for liberation will be benefited by the practice of this Mudra.

11. TANTRA YOGA (SWAMI SIVANANDA)

Salutations to the Divine Mother, who is Parabrahman of the Vedantins, Parama-Siva of Saiva Siddhantins, Maha-Vishnu of the Vaishnavites; who is the Father in Heaven of the Christians, Allah of the Mohammedans, Jehova of the Jews, Nirvana of Buddhists, Ahura Mazda of Zoroas-trians, the Thing-in-Itself of occidental philosophers, the God Almighty of all religions.

The Sakti philosophy is as old as the Vedas. The Devi Sukta in the Rig Veda is a real source of the Sakti doctrine. The Devi is not only the principle of creation, the principle of cosmic energy, but is also the principle of Divine Knowledge. The glory of the Devi is most elaborately sung In the Sakta Agamas and Tantras and in the Devi Bhagavata also.

In the Sakti doctrine, Siva is the Supreme unchanging

eternal consciousness and Sakti is His kinetic power. Universe is Power. Universe is a manifestation of Devi's glory. This is the affirmation of the Sakti doctrine. Sakti being the power of God, Sakti is one who possesses Sakti.

Tantra Sadhana bestows tremendous Siddhis or powers. It should be learnt under a Siddha Tantric Guru. The Tantric student must be endowed with purity, faith, devotion, dedication to Guru, dispassion, humility, courage, cosmic love, truthfulness, non-covetousness and contentment. Absence of these qualities in the practitioner means a gross abuse of Saktism.

Saktism had been one of the potent powers for the spiritual regeneration of the Hindus. When practised by the ignorant, unenlightened and unqualified persons, it has led to certain abuses; and there is no-denying that some degraded forms of Saktism have sought nothing but magic, immorality and occult powers.

The Sakti Tantra is Advaita Vada. It proclaims that Paramatman and Jivatman are one. The Saktas accept the Vedas as the basic scriptures. They recognise the Sakta-Tantras as Texts expounding the means to attain the goal set forth in the Vedas.

Tantra system is an integral part of Hinduism. Sakti system is one of the most important of Eastern systems. Tantra Sastra deserves a careful and deep study. The fundamental ideas of this system are in accordance with reason. The teachings of the Tantras are very correct. The Sakta Tantra is a Sadhana Sastra of Advaita Vedanta. It is indeed a deep and powerful system.

The Tantra texts are not books of sorcery or witchcraft, magic spell and mysterious formulae. They are wonderful scriptures, All persons without the distinction of caste, creed or colour, may draw inspiration and attain spiritual strength, wisdom and eternal bliss. They are Sadhana Sastras. They show the path

to liberation, perfection, freedom and immortal bliss.

The Tantra is in some of its aspects a secret doctrine. It is a *Gupta Vidya*. You cannot learn it from the study of books. You will have to get the knowledge and practice from the practical Tantriks, the Tantric Acharyas and Gurus who hold the key to it.

The word 'Sakti' comes from the root 'Sak' which means 'to be able', 'to do'. Sakti is symbolically female, but it is in reality neither male nor female, but only a force which manifests itself in various forms. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, electricity are Her gross forms — Apara Prakriti. Life-element is Her Para Prakriti. Mind is a modification of Chit Sakti.

Tantra Yoga lays special emphasis on the development of the powers latent in the six Chakras, from Muladhara to Ajna.

May Para Sakti or Devi, the Universal Mother Jagadamba bless you all with wisdom, peace and Immortal Bliss.

12. KUNDALINI YOGA

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

KUNDALINI AND CHAKRAS

Kundalini Sakti is the coiled-up, dormant, cosmic power that underlies all organic as well as inorganic matter. It is the primordial energy that lies at the basal Muladhara Chakra in a dormant, potential state. Kundalini Yoga is that Yoga which treats of Kundalini Sakti, the seven Chakras or centres of spiritual energy, the arousing of the sleeping Kundalini Sakti and its union with Lord Siva in Sahasrara Chakra at the crown of the head. The seven Chakras are pierced by the passing of Kundalini Sakti to the top of the head.

The seven Chakras are: *Muladhara* (at the anus), *Svadhishthana* (at the root of the organ of generation), *Manipura* (at the navel), *Anahata* (in the heart), *Visuddha*, (in the neck), *Ajna* (in the space between the two eye-brows) and

Sahasrara (at the crown of the head).

Nadis are the astral tubes that carry Pranic currents (vital energy). They cannot be seen by naked eyes. They are not the ordinary nerves, arteries and veins. There are 72000 Nadis. Among them three are important. They are *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sushumna*. The *Sushumna* is the most important one, because *Kundalini* passes through this *Nadi* only. The first step in *Kundalini Yoga* is the purification of *Nadis*. When *Sushumna* is pure then only *Kundalini* will pass through it. Purification of *Nadis* is done by the practice of *Pranayama*.

The Yogi opens the mouth of *Sushumna Nadi* through *Pranayama*, *Bandhas* and *Mudras*, awakens the sleeping *Kundalini* and takes Her to *Sahasrara* at the crown of the head through the lower six *Chakras*. *Kundalini* sleeps in the *Muladhara* in 3½ coils. The three coils represent the three *Gunas* (*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*) and the half coil represents the *Vikritis*.

Kundalini is awakened through *Pranayama*, *Asanas* and *Mudras* by *Hatha Yogins*; through concentration by *Raja Yogins*; through devotion and perfect self-surrender by *Bhaktas* or devotees; through analytical will by the *Jnanis*; by *Japa* of *Mantra* and by the grace of the *Guru*.

Chakras are in the *Linga Sarira* (astral body). *Linga Sarira* is of 17 *Tattvas*, viz., 5 *Jnanendriyas* (ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose); 5 *Karmendriyas* (speech, hands, legs, genitals, anus); 5 *Pranas* (*Prana*, *Apana*, *Vyana*, *Udana*, *Samana*); *Manas* (mind); and *Buddhi* (intellect). These have corresponding centres in the spinal cord and the nerve-plexuses in the gross body. Each *Chakra* has control and function over a particular centre in the gross body. These cannot be seen by the naked eyes.

Sukshma Prana moves in the nervous system of the *Linga Sarira* (astral body). *Sthula Prana* moves in the nervous system of the gross physical body. The two courses are intimately

connected. They act and react upon each other. The *Chakras* are in the astral body even after the disintegration of the physical organism at death.

Wherever there is an interlacing of several nerves, arteries and veins, that centre is called *Plexus*. Similarly there are plexuses or centres of *Sukshma Prana* in *Sushumna Nadi*. All the functions of the body, nervous, digestive, circulatory, respiratory, genito-urinary and all other systems of the body are under the control of these centres in *Sushumna*. These are subtle centres of vital energy. These are the centres of consciousness (*Chaitanya*). These subtle centres of *Sushumna* have their corresponding centres in the physical body. For example, *Anahata Chakra* which is in the *Sushumna Nadi* has its corresponding centre in the physical body at the heart (Cardiac *Plexus*).

The subtle centres in the *Sushumna Nadi* are otherwise known as *Lotuses* or *Chakras*. A particular *Tattva* preponderates at every *Chakra*. There is a presiding deity in each *Chakra*. In every *Chakra* a certain animal is represented. It denotes that the centre has the qualities, *Tattvas* or *Gunas* of that particular animal. There are six important *Chakras* — *Muladhara*, *Svadhishtana*, *Manipura*, *Anahata*, *Visuddha* and *Ajna*. *Sahasrara* is the chief *Chakra*. It is in the head. These seven *Chakras* correspond to the seven *Lokas* (*Bhuh*, *Bhuvah*, *Svah*, *Mahah*, *Jana*, *Tapah* and *Satya Lokas*). *Muladhara* to *Visuddha* are the centres of *Pancha Bhutas* (five elements) — earth, water, fire, air and ether. *Ajna* is the seat of the mind.

When *Kundalini* is awakened it passes on from *Muladhara* to *Sahasrara* through all the *Chakras*. At every centre to which the Yogi directs the *Kundalini*, he experiences a special form of *Ananda* (Bliss) and gains special *Siddhis* (psychic powers) and knowledge. He enjoys the Supreme Bliss when *Kundalini* is taken to *Sahasrara Chakra*.

PETALS ON CHAKRAS

Each Chakra has a particular number of petals with a Sanskrit alphabet on each petal. The vibration that is produced at each petal is represented by the corresponding Sanskrit letter. Every letter denotes the Mantra of Devi Kundalini. The letters exist in the petals in a latent form. These can be manifested and the vibrations of the Nadis felt during concentration.

The number of petals on the lotuses varies. Muladhara, Svadhishtana, Manipura, Anahata, Visuddha and Ajna Chakras have 4, 6, 10, 12, 16 and 2 petals, respectively. All the 50 Sanskrit letters are on the 50 petals. The number of petals in each Chakra is determined by the number and position of the Yoga Nadis around the Chakra. I will make it still clearer. From each Chakra a particular number of Yoga Nadis crop up. The Chakra gives the appearance of a lotus with the Nadis as its petals. The sound produced by the vibrations of the Yoga Nadis is represented by the corresponding Sanskrit letter. The Chakras with their petals hang downwards when Kundalini is at the Muladhara Chakra. When it is awakened, they turn towards Brahmarandhra. They always face the side of Kundalini.

MOVEMENT OF KUNDALINI

The Kundalini current rises through the spine and sometimes crawls like an ant. Sometimes, when the Yogi is pure, it jumps like a monkey and reaches the Sahasrara. Sometimes it rises like a bird that hops from one branch to another. Sometimes the spiritual current rises up like a snake and moves in a zig-zag manner. Sometimes the Yogi swims happily like a fish in the ocean of divine bliss.

The Yogic practitioner will get help from within when he moves from Chakra to Chakra. A mysterious power, a mysterious voice, will guide him at every step. He should have perfect, unshakable faith in the Divine Mother. It is She who guides the

Sadhaka. It is She who takes Her child from Chakra to Chakra. She invisibly renders him all assistance. Without Her grace, you cannot move an inch in your ascent in the Sushumna.

If you are pure and free from all desires, Kundalini will awaken by itself and you will be benefited. If you awaken Kundalini by violent methods, forcibly, when your heart is impure and when desires lurk in your mind, you will come across temptations of various sorts, when you move from plane to plane; you will have a downfall. You will have no strength of will to resist these temptations.

That aspirant who has firm faith in Yogic Sastras, who is courageous, devotional, humble, generous, merciful, pure and dispassionate, can easily awaken Kundalini and attain success in Samadhi. He should also be equipped with right conduct and self-restraint; he should constantly engage himself in the service of his Guru and be free from lust, anger, Moha, greed and vanity.

When Kundalini is taken to the Sahasrara, when She is united with Lord Siva, perfect Samadhi (superconscious blissful state) ensues. The Yogi drinks the nectar of immortality.

13. WHAT IS VEDANTA?

(SWAMI SIVANANDA)

Vedanta is the science of the Reality. It is not merely a conceptual system or a speculation over what 'ought to be', but the factual knowledge of what 'is'. The Western philosophers have been busy with ascertaining what 'ought to be'; but the ancient Hindus have already discovered, realised and proclaimed the truth of what 'is'. Vedanta is the result of this discovery of the absolute Truth, the declaration of the nature of the supreme goal of life and the way thereto.

Vedanta holds the first place amongst all systems of philosophies. It is a system of philosophy in which human speculation has reached its very pinnacle. It is a unique system of thought which demands a subtle, sharp intellect to grasp its fundamental principles. It is unique in the boldness of its conclusions. It is absolutely free from all shades of dogmatism or pet doctrines. All philosophers should bow their heads with implicit obedience and perfect submissiveness before this grand philosophy.

Vedanta boldly proclaims with emphasis that you are the immortal, all-pervading Atman, the universal soul or supreme Brahman in essence, in reality, and that this little jiva or human being is identical with the Eternal or the Absolute. It is that sublime philosophy which elevates the mind at once to magnanimous heights of Brahman-hood, divine splendour and glory.

Vedanta is that bold philosophy that teaches unity of life or oneness of consciousness. It is the only philosophy that can really unite (on the basis of one common self in all) a Hindu and a Mohammedan, a Catholic and a Protestant, an Irishman and an Englishman, a Jain and a Parsee, on a common platform and in the core of their hearts also. It is the only philosophy that, when properly understood and practised, can put a definite stop

to world war and all sorts of dissensions, splits and skirmishes that exist in different nations and communities.

Vedanta says: "O little man! Do not identify yourself with this perishable body. Give up 'I-ness and mine-ness'. Do not hate your neighbour or brother and do not try to exploit him, because he is your own self. There is a common self or common consciousness in all. This is the same in a king and a peasant, an ant and a dog, a man and a woman, a cobbler and a scavenger. This is the real immortal entity. Mind is the dividing principle which tempts and deludes. Kill this mischievous mind. Control the senses which drag you out to the external objects. Fix the mind in the Source and rise above body and mind. Eradicate desires, learn to discriminate the Real from the unreal and identify yourself with this immortal, non-dual, self-existent, self-luminous Essence. Behold the one Self in all. See the one in many. All miseries will come to an end."

Hence, vedanta is the very meaning of life, the very fact of one's being; it is not merely a philosophical system to be reserved for intellectual pleasantries during leisure hours. Vedanta is as simple as life; and it is also as complex as life is.

Even a child can be taught vedanta, provided the teacher knows very well what vedanta truly means, and how it can be applied to the different stages of life. It is ignorance and wrong understanding that make people think that vedanta is an out-of-the-way and otherworldly theory concerning merely a life which follows death. Certainly vedanta is not such a narrow theory estranged from the fact of everyday life. Vedanta can and must be applied in the daily life of everyone. Without it life would mean only groping in darkness. What is man after all if not a thought, or a group of thoughts? And vedanta is the light which illuminates the world of thought, of understanding.

Vedanta does not say that one should detest the world

or isolate oneself in some world other than this. It does not proclaim that anyone should forsake his duties or put on castor-oil face or behave in an intolerable manner. Vedanta says that one should not be selfish or attached to any fleeting object; that one should live in the What is Vedanta? consciousness of the loving brotherhood, unity and the Self-hood or Atman-hood of the universe; that the truth of existence is One and indivisible; that division (or separation), hatred, enmity, quarrels and selfishness are against the eternal Truth; that the pain of birth and death is caused by desire generated by ignorance of the great truth that the highest state of experience or perfection is the realisation of Brahman, that everyone is born for this one supreme purpose and that all other duties are only aids or auxiliaries to this great duty of Self-realisation; that one should perform one's prescribed duties in life with the spirit of non-attachment and of dedication to the supreme Being, and that every aspect of one's life should get consummated in this supreme consciousness. It is not a question of abandoning something or holding on to something, but of a change in the vision of life. It is a change in the way of function of the conceptual and the perceptual consciousness that is required by vedanta. The body and its activities will be there; but these will be transformed into the lustrous gold of the liberated-life (jivanmukti) by the touch of the philosopher's stone of the knowledge of the Self. This life of Self-knowledge is life at its highest and best. This is the most blessed state, the state of freedom or moksha. This is what everyone should aspire after. The way to this state of realisation is vedanta-sadhana or jnana yoga.

Vedanta speaks of one Atman, Brahman or Self who exists in the past, present and future, who has no beginning, middle and end, who is the support for everything, who is an embodiment of wisdom, peace and bliss. The seers of the *Upanishads* have expressed their realisations in glowing language

and emphatic terms. They have given out their inner experiences after long research and mighty struggle. All these have been collected in the form of the *Upanishads* or knowledge portion of the *Vedas*. This constitutes the subject of vedanta philosophy.

IMPORTANCE OF THE VEDAS

Vedanta means 'end of the Vedas' or the revelation and essence of the teaching of the *Vedas*. It is expressed in the mahavakyas or great sentences of the *Upanishads*: 'Tat tvam asi — Thou Art That' and 'Aham Brahmasmi — I am the Self.

Vedas are the srutis (revealed scriptures of the Hindus). It is said that Brahman is to be learnt through the *Vedas* and independent thinking and reasoning have nothing to do with it. The *Vedas* are infallible and authoritative. They are superior to perception. Perception leads to errors. Perception of a jar, for instance, is really non-perception of everything other than the jar. Only when the jar and the rest of the world are directly presented before the mind is real perception possible. How can the atomic mind see the rest of the world? It is impossible. Therefore perception is not so authoritative and reliable as the *Vedas*. You see a blue colour in the sky. It is a false attribution. You cannot depend on perception. The *Vedas* are revelations, the direct super-intuitive experiences of rishis or sages. Sages and the *Vedas* give an accurate knowledge of Brahman and remove your doubts about the validity of the vedanta. God or Brahman is beyond the reach of the senses, beyond the reach of mind and speech. The *Vedas* are the basis of nididhyasana or deep meditation. The Brahmakara vritti is generated from the hearing of the mahavakyas 'Tat tvam asi' and 'Aham Brahmasmi' of the *Vedas*. Jnana yoga is impossible without sravana and manana. Some learned fools, who pretend to possess reason — whereas they really mistake their fancies and preferences for reason — declare that they will accept that portion of the *Vedas*

which appeals to reason. They will never get out of this worldly life. They are doomed for destruction.

The drift of the Vedas or *Upanishads* cannot be understood even in a hundred years by persons who are conceited and think themselves very learned. Therefore, abandon conceit and become humble.

VEDANTA — THY BIRTHRIGHT

Vedanta is the property of all. It has no quarrel with any religion whatsoever. It preaches universal principles and inculcates the idea of that universal religion which is the fountain-head of all the religions of the world. It is the great leveller, uniting all and giving room to all.

Vedanta is a magnetic healing balm for the wounded and the afflicted in the dreadful battlefield of this phenomenal existence. It is the divine ointment which removes the cataract of ignorance and gives a new inner eye of intuition, or wisdom. Vedanta is the direct royal road to the domain of unalloyed felicity and the supreme abode of immortality and eternal bliss. It is a Himalayan herb that can bring immediate life to a dying man. It lifts a man at once to the status of an Emperor of emperors, King of kings or Shah of shahs, even though he has nothing to eat and is clad in rags. It gives real inner spiritual strength, inspires, renovates, vivifies, invigorates and energises. It eradicates ignorance, the root cause for human sufferings, puts a stop to the never-ending wheel of birth and death and confers immortality, infinite knowledge and bliss. It gives hope to the hopeless, power to the powerless, vigour to the vigourless and joy to the joyless.

Vedanta includes all sects, all religions, all creeds, all cults and all nations. It proclaims the revelations of the sages of yore of India. It is the common property of all. It expands the heart and opens the eyes and brings a new life. It gives supreme joy and eternal bliss. It removes all barriers which separate man from

man and unites all people. It gives solace, strength and peace and removes all fears, doubts and anxieties, delusion and illusion.

Vedanta is very practical. It does not preach an impossible ideal. Vamadeva, Jada Bharata, Sankara and many others realised the truth of vedanta. You can also realise it if you will. What is wanted is regular and constant practice. You must have perfect faith in the utterance of the scriptures and in the words of the guru. You must have perfect faith in yourself first.

Vedanta wants you to give up attachment for the physical body, wife, children and property and to abandon all worldly desires for power, name and fame, cravings and longings. Vedanta wants you to mentally break all ties and connections with the world and to cut off ruthlessly all worldly attachment by the sword of discrimination.

Some ignorant people say that vedanta preaches immorality, hatred and pessimism. This is a very sad mistake. Vedanta does not preach either immorality or even indifference to morality. The realisation of Brahman is not possible for the immoral. Only an aspirant who has ethical perfection and who is endowed with the four means, can become a student of vedanta. How can you expect an aspirant who possesses discrimination, dispassion, serenity, self-restraint, forbearance, endurance, faith, one-pointed mind and a burning desire for liberation to lead an immoral life? It is quite absurd. Vedanta wants you to destroy selfish love and passion for the body and to develop pure, disinterested, cosmic love. It does not preach pessimism, but the pinnacle of optimism. It preaches: "Give up this little illusory pleasure; you will get eternal and infinite bliss. Kill this little 'I'; you will become one with the Infinite, you will become immortal. Give up this illusory world; you will get the vast domain of supreme peace of the Kingdom of God." Is this pessimism? Certainly not. It is wonderful optimism.

In the whirlpool of fleeting sensual pleasures you have forgotten the purpose of life and its goal. You live more for the body than for the soul. In your pursuit of the phantom shows of worldly vanities you have annihilated the spiritual instincts and longing of the soul. You think of your body, food, wife, son, friend, etc., but you do not turn your mind inward to find out what lies within yourself. You think that your body — this bundle of flesh and bones — is real, and on this basis you build the whole citadel of life's ambition and activities. You have mistaken the shadow for the substance and you are contented with superficial things. Though you are endowed with the power of thought, yet you do not wish to utilise this power in the quest of the immortal Self. You have abandoned the precious jewel of the Atman and caught hold of a broken glass-piece. Is this not a foolish act? You will weep in your old age.

Why do you bleat like a lamb? Assert. Recognise and realise your Brahman nature. I will tell you a small story. There was once a lion-cub left among some sheep by its dying mother. The sheep took care of the lion-cub. The lion-cub soon grew into a big lion and bleated "Ba-a-a-a" when the sheep bleated "Ba-a-a-a". One day another lion came and heard the sheep-lion bleating aloud with the other sheep. He was struck with amazement. He asked the sheep-lion: "Brother! What is the matter with you? Why are you here in such an abject state?"

The sheep-lion replied: "I am a sheep. I am happy here amidst my brothers and sisters."

"Nonsense," roared the other lion, "come along with me. I will show you. You are under a false delusion." He took the sheep-lion to the side of a river, showed him his reflection in the water and said to him: "Look at your reflection now. You are a lion. I am a lion."

The sheep-lion looked at the reflection and then said in

joy: "What a terrible mistake I have committed. I am a lion indeed. I am not a sheep at all." He made a terrible roar and went along with the other lion.

Brother! You are also bleating like the sheep-lion. You have forgotten your real divine nature. You are hypnotised by maya. Dehypnotise yourself and roar OM, OM, OM. Become a lion of vedanta. You are the immortal Self. Do not identify yourself with the perishable body. Identify yourself with the undying eternal Brahman and be free.

GOSPEL OF VEDANTA

Tell me, friend, who has filled the sky with the clouds? Who holds the stars in the firmament? Who holds the canopy in the form of the sky? Who moves the mind, prana and the senses? Who has given the sweet fragrance to the flowers? Who pumps the blood from the heart to the arteries? Who converts the food into blood and blood into seminal energy and milk? That supreme intelligence which is at the back of all these names and forms and phenomena is Brahman, the immortal Self, the Absolute, the Infinite, the supreme Being who is existence absolute, knowledge absolute and bliss absolute. It is eternal, perfect, pure, self-luminous. It is self-delight and self-knowledge. It is bodiless and formless. It is all-pervading, all-full, imperishable. It has neither beginning nor end. It exists in the past, present and future. It is self-existent. It is the source for the body, mind, prana, senses and the *Vedas*. No one can deny it, because it is the inner Self of all beings.

The goal of human aspiration is to attain Self-realisation. Self-realisation confers immortality, highest bliss, knowledge and supreme peace. Fixing the mind on the source or inner Self and getting it absorbed there is the highest sacrifice, highest charity, highest karma, highest bhakti, highest yoga or highest knowledge. The little self-arrogating 'I' vanishes now. Just as the river joins

the ocean, the little self becomes one with the ocean of bliss. With the disappearance of the little illusory 'I' comes the disappearance of 'you' and 'he', 'this' and 'that'; time, space and causation; 'mine' and 'thine'; the pairs of opposites; the ideas of jiva, Ishvara, nature, etc. The whole world presents itself as the Atman. This grand vision, this magnanimous samadhi or superconsciousness is the vision of ultimate Reality which is beyond description. Many have attained this vision and all can experience the same. Why not you also, friend? Apply diligently right now in its achievement.

Brahman or Atman or the Supreme Self is self-luminous. Brahman cannot be made manifest by anything else. Brahman manifests everything. The doctrine of self-luminosity is one of the foundational tenets on which the entire edifice of vedanta is constructed. The Atman or Brahman shines eternally and everywhere behind the names and forms, and gives light to the sun, moon, stars, lightning, fire, intellect and senses. By the light of the Atman all these shine, but they cannot illumine the Atman.

Vedanta treats of this ultimate Truth.

This world and body are super-imposed on Brahman, just as a snake is super-imposed on a piece of rope in semi-darkness. As long as the rope is not known and the idea of the snake persists, you are not free from fear. Similarly, this world will be a solid reality to you until Brahman is realised. When you see the rope with a light, the illusion vanishes and the fear disappears. Even so, when you realise Brahman this world vanishes and you are freed from the fear of births and deaths.

Thou art the Immortal Self. The Atman cannot be hurt by bombs or shells. It is invulnerable, invincible and imperishable. Dwell on the inner Self. Dwell on these ideas. There is no room for lamentation or fear. Be bold, be cheerful. Do not jeer at any one nor frown at anybody. Restrain all your senses and divest

yourself of desire and wrath. Do not look back. Turn your gaze inwards and contemplate. You will enjoy true happiness.

There is internal peace which is not disturbed by external happenings. This is the supreme peace of the soul or Atman. He who rests in this peace meets difficulties and troubles with fortitude and is not upset by adversities, calamities and trying circumstances.

Enough of this mundane life. Enough of this life of passion in this earth plane. You have spent your whole life, energy and time in obtaining material wealth and power, name and fame. All your efforts have gone in vain. All your wealth is but a broken shell when compared with the inexhaustible wealth of the Atman. Obtain this priceless spiritual wealth. Give up this vain selfish struggle. Meditate, look within now. Behold the marvellous Self and be free.

VEDANTA IS LIVING EXPERIENCE

All sorts of vanity, hypocrisy and self-conceit have been masquerading in the name of vedanta. It has become the fashion of the day to pass for a vedantin as it is then convenient to give up all sorts of responsibilities, rituals and restrictions of the household life and lead a happy-go-lucky life of ease, lethargy and inertia. There are many dry, lip-vedantins who take great pride in calling themselves vedantins, whether or not they understand the philosophy, whether or not they do any practice. Some retired officers who have not done any selfless service or any sadhana or worship or charity take to vedanta as a sort of fancy. Thus vedanta has become a very comfortable philosophy, because one can do whatever he chooses and eat whatever he likes. Licentiousness is mistaken for a life of expansion. If a man can eat anything in any hotel in any part of the world, if he can move socially with any man or woman, that does not mean he is a vedantin.

There is much tall talk of vedanta and idle vedanta gossiping now-a-days, but there is no practical vedanta. Nobody wants to do any real solid spiritual practice. Man feels ashamed to call himself a bhakta, but he takes great pride in calling himself a yogi or a vedantin because he foolishly imagines he will be respected by the public. Many ignorant vedantins have mistaken the body for Brahman and hence there is corruption amongst the so-called loose vedantins. This is not only lamentable but also highly deplorable.

One should live in the spirit of vedanta by destroying 'I'-ness, 'mine'-ness, selfishness and attachment, then alone can he be really happy even while discharging the duties of his life while remaining in the world. Then the petty life of hurry, worry, excitement and competition will seem as nothing when compared to the everlasting life of eternal sunshine and bliss in the Atman within.

It is a great pity that almost all people have totally ignored the simpler happy inner life of introspection and have caught hold of false toys of maya — such as money, sex, power, fame, name, position, etc. Sooner or later the experiences of the world, the knocks and blows of mundane existence, will force them to turn their minds inward to realise the true everlasting happiness. Even if you live in the true spirit of a single mantra of the *Upanishads*, you will attain the aim of existence — immortality and eternal bliss of the Self.

Learn to discriminate between the permanent and the impermanent. Behold the Self in all beings and in all objects. Names and forms are illusory. Therefore sublate them. Feel that there is nothing but the Self. Share what you have — physical, mental, moral or spiritual — with all. Serve the Self in all. Feel when you serve others that you are serving your own Self. 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Melt all illusory differences and remove

all barriers that separate man from man. Mix with all, embrace all. Destroy the sex-idea and body-idea by constantly thinking on the Self or the sexless and bodiless Atman. Fix the mind on the Self when you work.

Tear into pieces the veil of ignorance. Catch the fickle deer (the mind) with the snare of enquiry and constant meditation on Brahman. Mount the elephant of Self-knowledge and roam about freely on the highest peak of supreme wisdom of the Self. Shake off the bonds of Karma through discrimination, dispassion and non-attachment. Know the secret of true bliss through concentration and meditation. Root out passion, embrace peace, enjoy the glory of Self-bliss and delight in the Self within.

The student of vedanta puts the 'neti-neti' doctrine into daily practice. He says: "I am not this perishable body. I am not this mind. I am not this prana. I am not the senses." (Neti-neti' means 'not this, not this'.) This is the path of negation. But he tries to identify himself with the all-pervading Atman or Self. This practice culminates in the attainment of Self-realisation. It leads to the immediate intuition of the all-filling Brahman.

Perform worship of the Atman at all times. Live a regulated life. Mould your character. Develop noble and virtuous behaviour. Be righteous and work for the good of others. Be devoted to your preceptor. Live under life-long vows. Develop compassion and power of concentration. Introspect, look within. Try to remove your defects. This is real sadhana. This is the most difficult sadhana, but you have to do it at any cost.

Break the bonds of desire. Preserve equanimity in success and failure. Do not manifest any liking for life or dislike for death. Do not wish evil to the man who beats you or good to the man who helps you. Take as much food and drink as will barely keep up life. Purify the mind. Free yourself from all attachments. Mentally tear off all bonds and ties and live as free

as the wind. You will surely attain eternal happiness. This is the essence of the teachings of the *Upanishads* and sages of yore. This is real, eternal life in Atman. Put these things into practice in the daily battle of life. You will shine as a dynamic yogi or a jivanmukta. There is no doubt about this.

Intellectual development is nothing. It is easy. If you sit at the Central Library, Baroda, or Imperial Library, Calcutta, for three or four years with a dictionary by your side you can develop your intellect. But to remove one defect needs a great deal of struggle for many years. Many vicious habits will have to be rent asunder. There are some people who can deliver lectures for a week on one verse of the *Bhagavad Gita* or the *Upanishads*. They command respect, and yet they are disliked by the public because they still have great defects. They have not done much introspection or drastic sadhana to remove their defects. They have developed only their intellect. What a great pity!

PRACTICAL VEDANTA

Mere theorising of vedanta principles will not do. You should live in the spirit of vedanta. You should become a practical vedantin. I believe in practical vedanta, in solid spiritual practice. I believe in thorough overhauling of worldly nature, of worldliness of various sorts.

An Englishman, a district collector, saw a sick patient on the roadside in a dying condition. He was a very sympathetic man. He carried the patient to the neighbouring hospital on his own shoulders. Look at his feeling of oneness. He is a practical vedantin, whether he knows *Upanishads* or not.

The sun, the flowers, the Ganges, the sandal tree, the fruit-bearing trees and the cows all teach practical vedanta to the world. They live for serving humanity in a disinterested spirit. The sun radiates its light alike over a cottage of a peasant and a

palace of a maharajah. The flowers waft their sweet fragrance to all, without expecting any return. The cool refreshing water of the Ganges is drunk by all. The sandal tree wafts its aroma even to the man who cuts it with an axe. All fruit-bearing trees behave in the same manner. They please the gardener who nourishes them as well as the man who cuts them. The cows live to nourish babies, children, invalids and convalescents. Imagine for a moment that the world is devoid of cows for six months or the race of cows has become extinct. How miserable and weak you will become! The world will abound with anaemic patients. Learn lessons from these practical vedantins and become wise.

Rajah Janaka lived the life of a practical vedantin while ruling his kingdom. You cannot conceive of any man busier than Rajah Janaka. He was ruling over millions of people and yet he was a sage, a deep thinker, a profound philosopher and a practical vedantin. He had no attachment to his property or body or family people. He shared what he had with others. He moved with all and had equal vision and a balanced mind. He led a very busy life amidst luxuries, but was not a bit affected by external influences and he always kept up a serene mind. He held discussions with various sages on transcendental matters. That is the reason why he still lives in our hearts,

Vedanta is not merely a concept or a dogma. It is neither a theory nor a dry philosophy for contention and argumentation. It is the actual life of perennial joy in Brahman or Truth. A single practical vedantin like Sankara could move the whole world. A practical vedantin possesses tremendous inner spiritual strength. The whole world rejoices at the sight of a real practical vedantin. Practical vedanta is a living experience, the melting of the individual self in the ocean of consciousness or the Supreme Self. The experiencer exclaims with inexpressible joy: "All indeed is Brahman. All differences, distinctions, qualities have vanished.

I see Brahman and Oneness everywhere. I am Brahman."

Vedanta must enter the very bones, nerves, cells and interior chambers of your heart. Whatever you have — be it physical, mental, moral or spiritual — must be shared with all. This is real vedanta. I do not believe in lip-vedanta — this is hypocrisy, pure and simple. Even a little of practical vedanta will elevate a man quickly and make him immortal and fearless.

The vedanta method of enquiry of 'Who am I?' is the best method for eradication of all disease and ensuring perfect health and a high standard of vigour and vitality, but many students do not realise the full benefits despite their practice, on account of their weak will and some error in sadhana. They have not got a clear, vivid, full and intelligent conception or mental picture of the nature of the real, infinite 'I', the source of mind, world and everything. They have got a vague, hazy idea only. Hence they do not keep up good health. I have come across many good vedantins who practise the enquiry of 'Who am I?'. They all possess very feeble health and low vitality. They have some complaints or other throughout the year and are not able to do vigorous, constant sadhana. Hence, I prescribe the practice of asanas and pranayama for those aspirants who practise 'Who am I?' enquiry and who are not able to keep up good health by this method alone. A combined method is a great help in such cases. The practice of asanas and pranayama is certainly not incompatible with the practice of 'Who am I:' enquiry. It is a healthy combination. The practice of pranayama renders the mind steady and helps the student to make the enquiry without any interruption, more vigorously. Many are getting on wonderfully well by this healthy combined method.

If a yogi or a sannyasi who is able to keep up serenity of mind while living in a cave in the forest complains of disturbance of mind when he lives in the bustle of a city, he has no control of

mind, and no inner spiritual strength. He is not a practical vedantin. He has no Self-realisation, he has not attained the goal of life. He is still within the domain of maya. A real yogi or a practical vedantin is one who can keep perfect calmness of mind while performing intense activities amidst the bustle of a city. This is the central teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Lord Krishna says, "*Remember Me at all times and fight.*" Lord Krishna imparted his instructions to Arjuna on the battlefield. Though Arjuna was despondent in the beginning, he gained spiritual strength and fought in the battlefield with perfect tranquillity of mind. He became a practical vedantin eventually.

Serve all with the feeling that everything is the Self. Melt all illusory differences and annihilate separateness. Destroy all unreasonable dislikes or prejudices. Mix with all, include all, embrace all. Never remain idle even for a moment. Lead a life of intense activity, but in the midst of it keep always a calm mind and thus become a practical vedantin. Glory to such practical vedantins. May they radiate joy, peace and love everywhere! May they demonstrate a life of practical vedanta by their exemplary living.

VEDANTA IS NOT FOR THE MASSES

Some over-enthusiastic religious leaders in their impatience to get the masses overnight to the zenith of vedanta, overlook and ignore the initial steps of karma and bhakti, with the inevitable result that the ignorant masses neither reach the top nor catch a glimpse of the first stages. The masses do not understand the subtlety and the ultimate import of the non-dual (advaita) thought, much less do they apply it in the everyday routine of life. It is a matter of common experience that only a microscopic minority of religious-minded people is putting vedanta into practice; but with the majority vedanta does not go beyond a mere intellectual assent. It is not for nothing that

No doubt vedanta contains the sublimest of truths, truths that need to be comprehended and applied in the daily walk of life, but that is no excuse why one should ignore the allied truths which are equally great, if not greater. The *Bhagavad Gita* has elucidated, in an inimitable manner, the complementary nature of these various paths and has shown that karma, bhakti and jnana are not competitive or alternative but the different ways to the same goal. So to preach vedanta and especially the non-dual philosophy irrespective of time, place and person, is carrying water in a sieve. You cannot teach vedanta to anybody and everybody. The whole affair will become a square peg in a round hole.

In proportion to the greatness of a truth, misapplications and misinterpretations are bound to crop up around it. Many crooked persons have exploited this weapon of vedanta for their personal ends. Vedanta is a sharp razor which can be trusted only in the hands of a skilful and a saintly warrior, not in the hands of a child or an ignorant man. 'Tat Tvam asi', 'Aham Brah� asmi' are the watchwords of vedanta, and under their

pretext many sins are committed, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously. A man who has imperfectly understood the real significance of these mahavakyas and easily poses himself as knowing God without considering others as such, easily deceives himself about his intellectual and spiritual superiority and commits countless sins, because he foolishly thinks, in justification of his wicked deeds, that he is not the doer but only the witness.

Vedanta must be taught to a select few. Udia Baba Swami taught bhakti and karma to the masses, to his disciples. He taught vedanta to a select few only and did not allow the bhaktas to attend his classes. Every intelligent teacher gives his teachings according to the temperamental leaning of the disciple. A promiscuous preaching of vedanta will land the teacher and the taught in difficulties which may not be easily surmounted.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF ASPIRANTS

There are four types of aspirants, viz., the karmic type, the devotional type, the mystic type and the rational type. Karma yoga should be prescribed for the busy and active men who have impurities in the mind; bhakti yoga for men of devotional temperament, in whom the emotion element predominates; raja yoga for men of mystic temperament and vedanta or jnana yoga for men of reason and will, for people of intellectual temperament.

The vichara method, or enquiry of 'Who am I?', can only benefit that aspirant who is free from impurity and tossing of mind, who is endowed with bold understanding, gigantic and tremendous will and sharp, subtle intellect and the four means. It is certainly not meant for all. It is meant only for the select few who can really understand and realise the full significance of vedanta and reap the fruits. That student who has a knowledge of vedanta, who has a clear understanding of the different categories, the five causes and the different devices such as

anvaya-vyatireka, bhaga-tyaga laksharta, neti-neti doctrine, etc., will be able to do the right kind of enquiry of 'Who am I?'. This qualified person only will be able to separate himself from the superimposed, illusory vehicles and to identify himself with the real 'I', the Atman, Sat-chit-ananda Brahman, pure all-pervading Consciousness.

Many intelligent persons have no idea of the real nature of the mind even. They mistake the body, mind and life for the real 'I'. If there is no purity the aspirant will certainly mistake the voice of desire or the voice of the mind for the voice of the Self. He will be misguided and will blink and grope in darkness. The help of a realised guru is indispensable in the beginning for the aspirant who treads the path of jnana yoga.

14. THE TRUTH ABOUT YOGA (SWAMI CHIDANANDA)

This is a world of passing names and forms. In it all things change and soon reach their dissolution. One Thing, however, abides changelessly amidst all change. It is the Great Reality, the imperishable, the indestructible, changeless Being whom you call God. This Great Being, this Universal Spirit, is the eternal source, substratum and the goal ultimate of all existence. He is existence eternal, knowledge absolute, infinite bliss, immeasurable and perennial peace. To attain Him is to become fearless and free and immortal. By attaining Him you transcend death; you pass beyond all sorrow, pain and suffering. You reach a state of indescribable joy, ineffable peace and a supreme exalted consciousness of bliss and beatitude. This is as tangibly and substantially possible as plucking a ripe fruit and tasting and enjoying it.

Yoga is the means by which the human soul attains the Supreme Being and experiences the infinite bliss which is all-perfect, unalloyed and absolute, yoga is the approach to Divinity. This is the simplest meaning of the term Yoga. It is the ascent unto Truth, or the movement towards the eternal, absolute Reality. The subject of Yoga is very important. This science has been evolved by the ancient seers and sages of the holy land of India and bestowed upon mankind for all time. A proper understanding of this universal heritage would, indeed, be a very great step towards the understanding of yourself and the world. A true evaluation of this great science would enable you to live your life in a more satisfying manner.

THE WISDOM OF THE EAST

At the present juncture in this momentous Twentieth Century, the concept of one world is gaining ground in the minds of all thoughtful men. The necessity for the exchange and interchange of cultural values and scientific knowledge, and many

other aspects of human life, is being felt more and more. The achievements of the different human races and nations are becoming the common property of the whole world. People everywhere are becoming more and more conscious of the oneness of humanity.

It is evident that the Occident has evolved many wonderful things in the external field of man's life, whereas the East, and India especially, has evolved wonderful things in the field of man's interior life. By pooling both things together, there would be mutual benefits for the East as well as for the West. If we of the East were to take of the benefits that the Occident has to bestow due to its progress and advancement in the external, material sciences and you, of the West, were to receive of the great wealth and wisdom of the East and to borrow the practical methods for the perfection of your interior life, a new balance would be brought about in the world. In this context, the topic of Yoga is of real importance. It is even more important at this time to state clearly what this great science consists of, because there abound so many misconceptions about it, varying in degree from the absurd to the fantastic. I shall, therefore, try to give as clear-cut and unmistakable a view as possible of what Yoga is and dilate upon what significance it holds for every person in this great and eventful Twentieth Century.

WHAT YOGA IS NOT

First and foremost, Yoga is not mere acrobatics. There are some peculiar notions about Yoga, as though it were primarily concerned with the manipulation of the body into various queer positions: standing on the head, twisting the spine, or assuming of the odd poses demonstrated in the illustrated texts on Yoga. These techniques are employed for one type of Yoga practice, but they do not form an integral part of the most essential type. It is possible that without hearing of these physical poses, or

knowing anything about them, one could yet be a perfect Yogi. The practice of the poses is not an indispensable part of Yoga. At best, the poses serve as an auxiliary or a minor aid to Yoga proper.

Secondly, Yoga is not the performance of magical feats. I mention this especially because, unfortunately, there are many misconceptions in the West due to certain pretensions made by some fake Yogis or pseudo-Yogis of the East. I am not ashamed to admit what is a fact. During the past fifty years, many great Swamis and Yogis have come to the West, but also some charlatans and fakes. Without any right or claims to this great science, they have posed as Yogis in order to gain for themselves a comfortable living or to serve some other selfish interest. They have terribly disillusioned many sincere seekers in the West. In the past they have come and they are present even now. Unfortunately, anything that is good always gets corrupted by perverted people. This has happened all over the world at all times in history. There is some selfish motive behind the deliberate mystification of things pertaining to Yoga. The consequent distortion of this true science has caused much disillusionment. It will not be out of place for me to tell you in frank and clear terms that not all that has been put across as Yoga by Hindus is really Yoga. Yoga is not magic, nor is it the performance of any extraordinary or unusual feat.

Yoga is not Fakirism — as is believed by most tourists and travellers in the East, especially news people, who always prefer the fantastic and the sensational to the sensible and the normal. These people have managed to bring back to the West the idea that Yoga is some form of self-torture: such as lying on a bed of nails, burying oneself underground, chewing and swallowing pieces of glass, drinking acid, swallowing nails or piercing oneself with pins and needles. These are the pictures

they present of the “Yogi of India”. They may portray a man with matted hair and naked body who lies on a bed of nails or who is suspended, perhaps, from a tree branch, head down and feet up. This has nothing to do with Yoga, and real Yogis have nothing to do with all this.

Yoga is not any weird ceremonial or peculiar rite. It is not hedonism. It is not paganism. It is not palmistry. It is not fortune-telling, it is not prophesying. It is not astrology. It is not thought-reading. Nor is it the dispensing of charms to ward off evil spirits. None of these is Yoga. If people call themselves Yogis and then explain their Yoga by doing any of these things, they are just misusing the name of “Yoga”, the label of “Yoga”. Yoga is the pure science of realizing your divine nature, the pure science of unfolding the perfection that is inherent in you, the pure science of achieving the true purpose of life. Yoga is not auto-hypnotism or self-hypnosis. It is not going into a hypnotic trance by the repetition of certain incantations or by the monotonous performance of certain gestures, though this is the view held by some of the so-called enlightened and intelligent people who have studied the science. Such a view shows a woeful and deplorable lack of understanding of the real import of Yoga.

Yoga is not experiences like those obtained by taking lysergic acid or mescaline or peyote (of Mexican origin) or divine mushrooms. These experiences are not Yoga, nor are they even *like* the experiences resulting from the practice of Yoga.

Yoga is not occultism or mystery-mongering. Although some of the Yogic techniques have been kept a secret, there is a good and valid reason for this. Just as you keep a child away from an intricate piece of machinery, just as you keep an intricate piece of machinery out of the reach of a child, some of the techniques of Yoga have been kept in secret — but this is not secrecy for the sake of secrecy. It is in order to ward off those

who are not yet fit to go into those aspects of the science which require care and close attention. When these very people have attained the necessary fitness, they are immediately taken into the inner knowledge of the secret techniques. Thus, Yoga is not mystery-mongering or secrecy.

Lastly, Yoga is not a religious cult. Because Yoga was evolved in the East, it does have certain Eastern concepts behind it. This is true. But these concepts form only the metaphysical background to Yoga proper. They do not have anything to do with the actual evolution of the science of Yoga proper. The highly evolved and practical techniques of Yoga may be applied by all races, nations, castes, creeds, churches and sects. Your affiliations are of little account, because this body of practical techniques stands out distinct and entirely separate from all those metaphysical concepts in the background. It is true that Yoga was evolved by the Hindus as they refined certain concepts of religious significance, but this one result of their researches — Yoga — is of universal value. It is in this way that you should clearly distinguish Yoga from the metaphysics from which it stems. The concepts are peculiarly Hindu and Eastern, but Yoga, separable from its philosophical and historical background, is beyond theoretical concepts; and therefore cannot be correctly referred to as Hinduism.

SORROW AND SUFFERING — THE GENESIS OF YOGA

Now having tried to tell you what Yoga is not — not acrobatics, not magic, not torture, not weird rites or ceremonials, not hedonism or paganism, not occultism or mystery-mongering, not auto-hypnosis or LSD and mescaline experiences — I shall tell you what Yoga is. Yoga is essentially a spiritual matter concerning a spiritual method. It is an intensely practical approach towards the realization of the Supreme Reality, the

very Centre of your lives — God. Yoga is the heritage of all humanity.

Briefly, I shall now touch upon the genesis of Yoga. Observing man's life on earth, you will have to admit that life is not all ice-cream and chocolate milk-shakes and drive-ins. It is birth, growth, pain, suffering, sorrow, loss and gain, honour and dishonour, fulfilment and disappointment, struggle, affliction, disease and, ultimately, decay of the human frame and death of the body. These things are absolutely inexorable and inevitable.

Man is full of defects, full of weaknesses. His mind is filled with like and dislike. Some he calls his very own, others he calls not his own, and thereby opposes the interests of the one group to the interests of the other. Enmity, malice and spite arise. Friction, riots and quarrels break out. This problem — that of sorrow, suffering, disease and disappointment, decay, dissolution and death — is the great problem that brought about the lofty science of Yoga. Yoga provides an unfailing and effective solution for all ills for all time.

Yoga traces its origin to the necessity felt by man to rid himself of all sorrow and suffering and to free himself for ever from the bondage brought about by finite existence and to attain final victory over all fear, over death itself. To this great problem, Yoga comes as the practical solution. It provides the lost link between man and the Infinite Source of his being. Yoga plainly states that man is essentially of the nature of bliss, perfection, peace and freedom. Everlastingly he is one with That. The loss of his awareness of that oneness with the infinite, all-perfect Source of his being is the very cause of his involvement in this earth-process called life. To regain the true awareness and to realize once again his everlasting oneness with the Divine is actually the practice of Yoga. The means of overcoming the defects and imperfections of this earth-life and thus of

experiencing union with the Supreme constitute its structure. Yoga shows how to overcome the imperfections of the lower nature and how to gain complete mastery over the mind and the senses. Man is essentially all-perfect. He is not the mind and the senses. Man is not these passion-filled sense urges. He is not this desire-ridden mind, being pulled here and there, torn apart by a hundred thoughts. Essentially he is an all-perfect being, an emanation from the Divine Essence.

A SCIENCE BUILT UPON PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

What Divinity is, that, essentially, man also is. Man partakes of the same nature, and is enabled to regain his awareness of that divine nature by subjecting himself to the process of Yoga. By availing himself of certain well-tried practical techniques, one is raised in consciousness from the physical level to the vast transcendental spiritual level. This higher level becomes one with the Consciousness of God. It is Divine Consciousness, God Consciousness, Cosmic Consciousness. This is the attainment that is bestowed upon the Yogis who have tried again and again, a hundred thousand times, the various practical methods which culminate in this glorious experience. Seers and mystics throughout the centuries have proved the validity of these techniques right to the very last factor. The science does not depend merely upon belief, but upon experience gained from the practical application of its principles. The actual living realization has been attained and the glorious experience declared with the authority of many who have mastered themselves. Such masters there are, even today, in all parts of India.

Outside of India too, there are perfected men and women whose souls have been illumined by this divine experience. But India's view of the purpose of life points directly towards the attainment of this very experience — God-realization. Therefore,

there are fewer God-illuminated souls outside of India. They may be few, but there still are some holy souls with high spiritual experiences in America, in Europe, and in the Far East. Not wishing recognition, they often live in obscurity. They are all Yogis, nevertheless. Whether you apply the term "Yoga" to their practices or not, their mode of life, their attainment, is Yogic according to the Sanskrit meaning of the term — a state of union with the Divine or an experience of oneness with the Great Reality. This is the real meaning of Yoga. Yoga stands for the experience of Truth or the Consciousness of Reality or union with the Divine.

There are secondary meanings of the term "Yoga". All the techniques which eventually bestow upon the practitioner the experience of Divine Consciousness may also be designated by the one word "Yoga". These various techniques, for the sake of an explicit classification, have been divided into four or five different practical approaches, each of which culminates in the experience of the One Great Truth. Certain definite, scientifically evolved and intelligently formulated techniques enable man to divest himself of all the impurities imposed upon him by the nature of his body, mind and senses, and to concentrate his thoughts entirely upon the Supreme. According to this definition, Yoga means to direct your mind towards God, to come on to a deep level of interior worship of the Divine and, finally, to realize your oneness with the Divine Consciousness. So, there is also a simple meaning to the term Yoga and it implies any effort that the soul may make in its effort to attain God.

It may be something you have found in text books on Yoga or it may be something which you have started to do without any prompting from any external source; if you find that a certain thing helps you in going towards God, and is in accordance with your individual need and temperament, then that thing is a part of your Yoga, whether or not it has been expounded in a Yoga text

or explained to you by a Hindu teacher. In Yoga, there is scope for infinite expansion. It is not a rigid science where changes and adjustments are forbidden. The basic techniques remain essentially unaltered, but the details of the practices may be modified to suit the practitioner, depending upon whether he is a Hindu or a Westerner, a man or a woman. Also, a certain technique which may be suitable to you in one form at a particular period in your spiritual life may be modified and altered to suit you in another stage of your spiritual life.

An example of modification is to be found in one of the simplest forms of Yoga. This is the practice of the utterance of the Divine Name. By constant repetition of the Name of God, you keep the thought of God in your mind always. By this remembrance of Him, you begin to feel His presence, and it helps to keep your mind free from all unworthy thoughts. You establish your mind in peace and calmness and lead your inner life in silence.

Now, the Name of God may be repeated in an audible manner. Your mind becomes concentrated if you hear your own repetition. Later on, as you evolve and begin to get the ability to concentrate the mind spontaneously, you may dispense with the audible type of repetition and carry on your chanting inaudibly, mentally. Thus you apply this single technique of repetition of the Divine Name in a particular way when you first begin, and at a later stage, in order to suit your new level of consciousness and convenience, you modify it and apply it in a different way.

Yoga is the practical method for the unfoldment of the inherent divine perfection that is within you. You are Spirit devoid of name and form. The mind is simply the medium for your expression. Yoga leads you into an awareness of your real nature. By means of Yoga, you qualify yourself for the realization of your eternal oneness with the Supreme.

A UNIVERSAL TECHNIQUE FOR ALL TIME

While this science was being evolved, the great seers were not so much concerned with the requirements of particular groups such as the Hindus or the Easterners; rather, they undertook a consideration of *man on earth* as he was constituted. It was apparent to them that the physical body and the mind served certain purposes: the body as an instrument of the mind and the mind as a channel for the expression of the soul. They observed that most unfortunately man was enslaved by the body, gripped by the senses, and caught up and tyrannized by the cravings of the mind. This was the picture of the earthly man — sense-bound and desire-ridden, the glory of his spirit entirely eclipsed — and this picture they sought to change by their practice of Yoga.

Yoga uses a technique by which you overcome the bondage of the body through restraining your senses, mastering your mind and controlling your thoughts and desires. Going beyond them, you reach the inner depth of your being where you know yourself to be what you really and truly are: an all-perfect and Divine being. Yoga was not given to man of any particular place or religion. It was given to all humanity. When people ask me about the suitability of Yoga for the modern mind, I feel that the question is pointless, for there is no such thing as the modern mind in relation to Yoga. Yoga deals with the perennial man. It deals with your Divine Essence encased within mind and matter, just as it has been since the dawn of creation and will be as long as the world lasts. There is no question of modern and ancient. You may call yourself modern now, but two thousand years from now, people will look back on 1960 and say, "Oh, those ancients of a bygone era!" So, 'modern' is just a relative term, whereas Yoga is a science not only for the past, but for the present and the distant future as well. As long as man exists on

earth, he will always be plagued by the problem of pain, suffering, disease, birth and death, and Yoga will always be the solution to this great problem.

The application of Yoga is universal. It may be applied within the framework of the religious life, yet it transcends religion. It is supra-religious. Yoga is far removed from any dogma or doctrine. Its basis, in so far as its concepts are concerned, is entirely universal. The extent of its applicability is coterminous with the whole of humanity for all time.

Now that we know that the central problem of life is man's bondage to mind and matter, what exactly does Yoga try to do? In brief, it tries to free you from your bondage and give you once again an awareness of your eternal Divine Nature. Yogis have found that the greatest hindrance and obstacle to this awareness is that thought in your mind which makes you say to yourself, "I am this body, this finite human being. I am subject to pain and sorrow. I am related to this and that. I am in need of this and that. I am suffering from hunger and thirst". To obtain pleasure and to avoid pain, the mind keeps man in a constant state of identification with this part of him that passes. Mind is completely externalized. It goes out through the senses to the sense objects. It beholds only the external universe. It does not withdraw itself from the senses and go inward to behold the true innermost nature deep within.

Mind is the hindrance. The channels for the outward motion of the mind may be found in the senses. Ultimately, it is the mind which is the supreme sense and the prime instrument. Now, it is bound to objects outside. If you were to make it go within, by careful introspection, you would be able to overcome all the defects and weaknesses of your human nature which are withholding from you that experience of the bliss and peace inherent in your divine nature.

TRAINING OF THE MIND IN YOGA

There is a fourfold expression of the mind. First, it is expressed as rationality or the power of reasoning. Second, it is expressed as emotion or love. Third, it is expressed as activity or dynamism. And fourth, it is expressed as reflection or contemplativeness. All four aspects of the mental being have to be disciplined and trained to go inward so that your resources are completely channelled and directed towards the Great Goal — God.

The power of reasoning should not be dissipated in the panorama of appearances called the world. This power should generate within you an understanding of the Supreme Essence which lies within, the very source of all intelligence, the shining light which makes your own intelligence luminous. Without It, you can neither think nor know. There are many wonderful techniques in Yoga for the diversion of all your thoughts towards the Great Reality, of all your emotions towards God, of all your dynamism towards the Great Goal, of all your reasoning powers towards the Absolute Truth. The channelling of these fourfold trends of your mind and nature towards the One Supreme Goal leads you beyond all sorrow, and makes you free for ever from the thralldom of bondage to the mind and the senses, and bestows upon you the luminous experience of Self-realization. You are made deathless.

Yoga is the science of getting your mind absorbed in God. You direct all your love to the Supreme Source of your being. You dedicate all your activities to the Great Goal which is your ultimate destiny. You concentrate all your thoughts in such a way that they can be withdrawn from this multifarious universe and made to merge into that great and glorious thought of God.

Directing all your intellectual abilities towards the realization of the Truth is known as the Yoga of the Intellect. In

this branch of Yoga, you practise a supreme exercise by trying to grasp the Reality intellectually, by actual rationality. Developing all your capacity to love God is known as the Yoga of Devotion or the Yoga of Love. Dedicating all your activities in life to God is yet another branch of the science of Yoga, in which you integrate, on an unselfish basis, all the various phases of your life's activities. Lastly, in Raja Yoga, you are made more and more conscious of God as the centre of your being, and you are employed in a very special process in which your thought is made to merge in Him entirely. There are many heartening signs that this Yoga is being seriously considered by many seekers in the West as the most suitable method for them to solve the perplexing problems of their civilization.

Now you clearly see the relationship between Yoga and yourself. Yoga makes available to you the scientific method for approaching God. Actually, anything that you do in this approach is really Yoga, whether or not it is branded as such. There is a very surprising inference in this statement, for then, all the great Christian saints and mystics who have sincerely tried to love God and worship Him and contemplate upon Him and realize their oneness with Him would be Yogis. Saint Augustine was a great Bhakti Yogi and Jnana Yogi combined. Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa of Avila were both great Raja Yogis. They were contemplative mystics who attained the Knowledge of the Truth through concentration and meditation.

If all these people have followed Yoga, then what is the speciality or the peculiarity of Yoga as it is practised in India?

SPIRITUAL RESEARCH OF THE INDIAN SAGES

First, as to the peculiarity of Yoga, there is none as it is practised in India. The same techniques are practised there as elsewhere. However, as to the speciality of Yoga, there is this —

in India is to be found the clearest conception of the process involved in concentration and meditation. The Indian sages made deep and thorough spiritual research to learn all that was involved in the process that takes man from his lower condition to the ultimate glorious condition that he is to attain. They made it their special concern to study the process in such detail that every bit of the human anatomy was revealed to them on the ascent unto Divinity. Every bit was perfectly analysed and known. From their study they found what obstacles were present in the way of the practical seeker. They discovered why these obstacles came and which factors inherent in human nature were the source of these obstacles; and they found out the way to remove these obstacles at their very source. For this purpose they formulated wonderful techniques, tried them out and proved them effective. They explained how these techniques worked and how they were to be applied. Their knowledge of the internal mechanism was amazing. Their knowledge of the structure of the human being was unparalleled. This, then, is the speciality of Yoga in India.

A heart specialist is referred to as a cardiologist and a brain specialist is referred to as a neurologist. These specialists have gone so deeply into their sciences that they have acquired from their studies a knowledge of all the available facts. Similarly, the Indian Masters made it their life-work to plumb into the very depths of man's being, and thus to analyse every bit of the process of transforming and spiritualizing and divinizing the nature of man. There is nothing left untouched. They knew everything about the mind, the body and the senses, and about the various forces that act upon the body, senses, and mind such as the food you eat, the company you keep, the habits you develop. Therefore, we have in Yoga a science evolved to such perfection that we find therein the very quintessence of the wisdom and the practical knowledge acquired by man through the many centuries he has lived. Though here and there this knowledge is partially held among

other people, in Yoga it is complete and perfect. Through Yoga, this perfect knowledge has been bequeathed to the whole of humanity.

THE OVER-ALL PATTERN OF YOGA LIFE

I shall now sum up briefly the over-all pattern of Yoga life. First of all, Yoga recognizes the true purpose of human life. It gives you the answer to the question: "Why have I come here and what is my task in life?" Then it opens your eyes to the true nature of the universe. It tells you not to be deluded by these passing objects which are perishable and therefore temporary. Objects do not give an unalloyed experience of pleasure or bliss. Yoga shows you the objects of this world as they really are, not as they appear to be, and warns you not to be duped and deceived by their external glamour, not to be thus lured and enslaved by them. It advises you to develop dispassion, for if you are passionately attached to objects, sorrow will be the harvest which you will have to reap.

There is an imperishable Reality which is all-perfect, which is of the nature of supreme bliss and immeasurable peace, and That alone will satisfy the great hunger which is in you for true happiness, for true freedom from all bondage, for freedom from all fear and from even the death process itself. Yoga points out to you the Goal and advises you to develop an intense aspiration to attain it. It shows you how to walk through this life as a serene and balanced being, unswayed by the pull of objects, not as an enslaved being easily unbalanced by the power of objects and thus plunged into agitation and fear.

Thus, one is armed to walk through life calmly, unattached. Or, if there is any attachment at all, it is only to the Supreme Goal, to the way of life which takes one towards it. One can be attached to virtue, to goodness, to purity, to truth. These attachments will purify the lower nature, expand the

consciousness and bring you closer to an awareness of the Divine Essence. Be attached to God. Avoid the tragic blunder of attaching yourself to material and perishable things. Develop the dispassion and discrimination that comprehend all things in their essential nature. Cultivate keen aspiration.

These practices lead to the right unfoldment of the Yogic pattern of life. The science of Yoga makes a study of man himself and declares that he is a triune being: first, with a gross and bestial nature; secondly, endowed with reason, but full of impurity and many doubtful tendencies; and thirdly, with a divine nature which lies deep within, all-pure and all-perfect. Absolute unblemished perfection is in you. In this Essence is peace, bliss, freedom, light and wisdom.

The foremost feature in the Yogic pattern of life is the process of purifying the lower nature. The many impurities of the body-mind nature are the real enemies of man. His enemies do not lie outside. Atom bombs and machine guns are not the real dangers. The real enemies are carnal desire, anger, avarice or greed, deluded attachment to things, arrogance or pride, and envy and jealousy. These are the six great enemies, the six impurities of human nature.

By rational effort, these blemishes can be overcome completely. By the use of his intelligence, man can master himself and radiate all the higher qualities of goodness and virtue that lie within. He is not merely a bestial being with blemishes, but a radiant personality with qualities that are very close to God-nature. Compassion, love, truthfulness, purity and selflessness are virtues you have to develop. Out of this practice comes a recognition of life's true purpose.

THE DIFFERENT YOGA SYSTEMS

There are various systems of Yoga which I will very briefly describe. In the intellectual system, one gets an understanding

of God by listening to the exposition of the nature of Reality, by reflecting upon It again and again, and through the power of reasoning and the intellect ultimately penetrating into It in the depths of meditation.

In the emotional system, one has a clear conception of God as a very dear, personal object—as one's own father or mother or beloved friend, or as the glorious king and master who is revered, worshipped and loved. Then a link is set up whereby pure affection and love is directed towards Him. This may be according to the pattern of links which human beings have. One may link himself with Him as His son, or as His daughter, or as His child; or one may think of himself as the parent and love the Lord as the divine child, perhaps as the child Jesus. Or, one may love the Lord as the humble servant of the Lord, thus dedicating all life's activities to His service. Or again, one may conceive of the Lord as his own friend. These are human relationships which are familiar to all; there is nothing abnormal or strange in them. Thus, the diversion and channelling of one's love-nature towards God is peculiarly suited and adapted to the person of emotional temperament. This is a very sweet path. One grows into this relationship easily by constantly thinking about Him, praying to Him, worshipping Him, feeling Him so close that you naturally walk with Him, talk with Him, live, move and have your being in Him. You will thus become totally integrated.

In the system of dynamic Yoga, the primary act is the shedding of the ego. Humility and selflessness are virtues which prepare the being to serve as an instrument of the Divine. For this, the personal ego has to stand aside completely. Then all creatures upon this earth may be seen as visible manifestations of God, as moving temples in which the Divine is enshrined. The service of others becomes the natural occupation of man, and in this way, every act is conceived of not as a secular act, but as an

act of worship. One who is engaged in the transmutation of his dynamism into divine realisation does his worship everywhere. The teacher in the school, the doctor in the hospital, the farmer in the field, the businessman in the stock exchange, can all engage in activity which is transmuted into pure worship by the inner attitude which is brought about to bear upon it. Even the so-called professional activity that is apparently secular can become the means of practising Yoga.

The fourth system is that of integrating your thought and absorbing it in God through concentration and meditation. This is a very beautiful path also. Thought is the movement of the mind-stuff. The movement of the mind is affected by the movement of the vital life-force within which is termed Prana and also by the movement of the body. The body, the psychic energy and thought — all three are inter-related. In this highly systematic Yoga, there is total subdual and control of the body, brought about by keeping it in a fixed and steady posture. There is subdual and control of the inner psychic energy through the techniques of breath-control. Ultimately, there is the culminating process in which the scattered rays of the mind are withdrawn and concentrated upon the idea of God. There are so many exercises given for concentration that there is bound to be one to suit every taste. In this way, one is raised above the level of the mind and taken into a state of superconsciousness in which the experience of the realization of oneness with God is bestowed upon him and he is released for ever from the bondage of the body and from death. Supreme liberation is obtained in that way.

PURITY — THE ALL-IMPORTANT FOUNDATION

All the techniques of Yoga require perfect ethical and moral purity. Purity is the foundation of Yogic life. One cannot be a bad man and then try to practise Yoga. One cannot allow himself to be impure, insincere, untruthful, deceitful, and harmful to others and,

at the same time, try to practise Yoga. There cannot be any spiritual realization when interior circumstances are imperfect. There cannot be any religious practice or true interior life when moral goodness is not deeply implanted in the being. One has to be rooted in goodness, in purity, in truth and in selflessness. Half of the process of Yoga is in thus getting perfectly established in ideal moral conduct. When this basis has been established, then the application of the techniques of Yoga is like the striking of a dry match upon the match-box — immediately there is a flame. Without the basis, it is like trying to ignite a wet match by striking it upon a cake of soap — nothing happens.

If one is not prepared to change one's nature from passion to purity, from untruth to truth, from hardness and rudeness to kindness, then the idea of the Yogic pattern of life is still very far-fetched. This does not mean that until one is absolutely perfect in all moral and ethical respects he may never enter into Yogic practice. Man is born to practise Yoga. He is born to worship God. That is the only purpose of his life. All other tasks are just secondary, and have a meaning only in relation to this central task. Therefore, whether one's ethical conduct is perfect or not, one has to start trying to live out this purpose.

In the beginning of one's spiritual life, stress has to be laid on the all-important task of achieving perfect moral goodness and ethical purity. All other aspects of Yoga have only a secondary place in the beginning. Later on, when this task is being properly carried out, the emphasis shifts more and more to the conduct of the purely interior life. In a very simple way the Lord Jesus brought home this truth. He said: "When you draw near to the altar to offer worship unto Me, first remember that if any of your brothers has offended you and you have not forgiven him, go now and forgive him. Otherwise your worship cannot be accepted". And he also said, "Even if you have been

offended not seven times, but seventy-seven times, go on forgiving the offender, for you cannot approach God nor find the love of God in your heart, if your heart is not also filled with the love of man, with the feeling of oneness with all beings".

In this way, one is made fit to enter into the House of Worship. God is Himself all-mercy and love, and if man does not grow into that nature, how will he be able to draw near to that nature? As you become godly, so you will have to approach God; then God will surely interfused with your God-nature. No barrier of an imperfect human nature will then be raised between God and you. The divine life will be sustained by the highest standards of moral and ethical perfection. It will be furthered by self-restraint and self-control, and it will be ultimately fructified through deep and intense meditation.

In all phases of the Yogic life, the supreme factor is the Grace of God. Call it what you will. It is the Grace of the Supreme Essence, the Source of all existence, in which alone man realizes his true nature and his deathless divinity. All the practices are purposeful when they make man move towards God and merge into oneness with Him.

Thus, in short: be good, do good, be kind, be compassionate; serve all, love all, see the Lord in all; be humble, be simple; purify, concentrate, meditate, realize; attain the Supreme Bliss.

15. YOGA — ITS IMPLICATIONS, OBJECTIVES AND ITS PLACE IN YOUR LIFE (SWAMI CHIDANANDA)

Homage and adoration to Yogisvara Bhagavan Sankara, the Lord of all Yogins and to Yogeshvara Sri Krishna Bhagavan, the supreme master of the Yoga science. Reverential prostrations unto Sri Ramakrishna Deva, the illumined saint of Dakshinesvar, who was the very living embodiment of all the varied Yoga Sadhanas that lead the human individual to divine perfection and liberation. May the choicest blessings of Lord Siva, Yogi Matsyendranath, Maharshi Patanjali, Devarshi Narada, Sandilya and other perfect Masters be upon all the Sadhakas who tread the path of Yoga.

Yoga is the science of liberation or Moksha Sastra. Yoga is the innermost core and quintessence of the true religion of man. Yoga is the methodology of your inner ascent towards spiritual illumination and God-experience. Yoga is the technique of attaining Divine Perfection and immortality. Yoga is the graduated practices that can lead you from passing unrealities to the Eternal reality, from spiritual darkness into the Light of divine illumination and from death and mortality of your body bound earth-consciousness into the awareness of immortality and everlasting life in the Spirit. Yoga is the art and science of diverting and directing your entire human personality potential, beyond your present state of sorrow, restlessness, isolation and fear into a higher state of Consciousness characterised by bliss, peace, fullness and fearlessness. Yoga is the Universal inner mystique that is to be found in the hidden inner depths of every living religion on earth.

The genesis of Yoga is shrouded in antiquity. It has come

into being as an answer to one of the greatest needs of mankind, namely, its need to free itself from sorrow, pain and suffering and to attain to a state of happiness, peace and lasting satisfaction. Man is a pilgrim, a lone traveller upon this earth-plane. You come alone and you depart alone. Empty handed you come into this world and even so you leave this earth at death empty handed and alone. This is the truth. As such, this world is not your permanent dwelling place. In truth your true abode is a higher dimension of existence other than this material world. Supramundane and pristine, it is the realm of the Spirit. This supreme spiritual state of absolute existence, eternal and infinite, is Brahman. It is Brahman or Atman of the Upanishads, the Supreme Tao of the Chinese Taoist philosopher, the supreme Plenum of Plotinus, the Thing-in-itself of Kant. It is the One indivisible nondual, eternal Reality. It is also the cosmic Soul, the God behind all religions. That Brahman is bliss. It is Infinite bliss and supreme Peace. It is the fulfilment of all desires, wants and wishes ever conceivable by man. It is divine beatitude and supreme felicity. Its attainment confers eternal satisfaction, liberation from all sorrow and pain and absolute fearlessness and freedom. This is the most covetable and desirable of all goals. Also, this is the true goal of real Yoga. Yoga is, therefore, a path that leads up to the state of supreme blessedness and peace. Its practices constitute the techniques for the purification and preparation of the human consciousness for entering into the experience of the supreme Blissful Divine Reality.

The thesis contained in the Vedanta and Yoga Philosophy is that the present state of human experience of the individual in this earth existence is a vitiated state of consciousness. This present state of your entire human personality, gross as well as subtle, comprised by your physical body, mind, emotion as well as intellect, has become totally outgoing (Bahirmukha) in its movement and thus wholly involved and entangled in the ever-

changing and perishable names and forms of this outer phenomenal appearance, this gross material world show. This has directly given rise to your human earth-experience of love and hate, joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure, happiness and misery, elation and depression and all the dual throng that make up the fabric of your life's experience from birth to death. You have forgotten your true identity which is not human but Divine. Your present human identity is only a temporary phenomenon that has been superimposed upon your essential identity (Nijasvarupa), which is divine and has neither birth nor death. You are eternal and imperishable. Your present deplorable state of weeping and wailing, sorrowing and suffering is due to this spiritual non-awareness and self-forgetfulness and due to your becoming caught up in the grip of an erroneous identification with temporary limiting adjuncts (Upadhi) like your gross physical body, with its organs of action (Karma Indriyas), the five aspects of the inner vital life-force (Pancha Pranas), the five inner faculties of perception or knowledge (Jnana Indriyas) and the four-fold inner instruments that constitute your hidden psychological self, namely, mind, intellect, the ego and the subconscious. The human ego principle (Ahamkara) has arisen out of this identification (Adhyasa) brought about by the individualised aspect (Avidya) of the indescribable, incomprehensible cosmic nescience (Maya).

Thus, it must now be quite clear to you that it is your own human faculties, physical and mental, that are the instruments of your bondage to Samsara. These faculties constitute your entire human personality. They are what all you have when you take birth in this world. Hence, you have no alternative but to invoke only their aid and utilise these very Same faculties, internal and external, which are now the cause of your bondage, to free, extricate yourself from its bondage to phenomenal existence (Samsara Bandhana) and made the necessary and suitable self-exertion (Purushartha) to attain to a state of liberation (Kaivalya Moksha). Being limited by Upadhis and conditioned by time and

space factors, pure Consciousness assumes modified states like limited ego-consciousness (Ahamkara and Abhimana), the feeling of "mine-ness" with regard to the physical body and intense attachment to it and all things and beings who are pleasing to its senses (Mamata and Asakti). From these two, namely, "I" and "mine", selfishness and self-seeking manifest in the human nature impelling the individual to become engrossed in self-centered mundane activities propelled by sense-appetites and the desires and cravings of the mind. In their wake follow anger, delusion, avarice, jealousy, hatred and unrighteousness. This is the nature of worldly existence.

Ego, attachment and the resultant selfishness are the bane of human life. They turn the entire field of human earthly activity (Vyavahara) into an arena of warring egos, clashing self-interest, conflicting likes and dislikes, bringing about disharmony and discord that rob you of peace and happiness. The science of Yoga and its superbly conceived techniques and practices serve as a life-line thrown to the human mortal struggling in this ocean of earthly existence buffeted by the pairs of opposites (Dvandvas) and preyed upon by attraction, repulsion, grief, delusion, fear, anxiety, disease, old age, decay and the like. Yoga provides the means of transcending and liberating oneself from the threefold afflictions all creatures are subject to. Its wisely formulated Sadhanas are so conceived as to withdraw the mind and the senses from the non-eternal, passing names and forms of the objective universe and given them a new direction towards God-experience and the direct realisation of the eternal Reality. They impart to your life an upward vertical dimension that takes the form of a progressive ascent into higher levels of consciousness culminating in the supreme state of highest God-consciousness or Aparokshanubhuti. The state of permanent liberation from all sorrow and attainment of perennial bliss is the fruit of the Yoga life and practice.

The intelligent and wise utilisation of these inner faculties and powers of thinking, feeling and reasoning have evolved and taken the form of Dhyana Marga or Raja Yoga, of Prema Marga or Bhakti Yoga, Vichara Marga or Jnana Yoga respectively. The last mentioned is sometimes referred to by the generic term 'Vedanta'. The imparting of a God-ward direction, to the physical dynamism of your day-to-day activities transforms all activities into Nishkama Karma Yoga by spiritualising their inner content even if their outer form remains unaltered. Thus, your thought-force, emotion and the powers of the intellect become the effective motive force for imparting a new spiritual direction to and for sublimating and elevating your consciousness from its present deluded body-bound gross earthly consciousness, into a sublime and lofty plane of unconditioned divine Consciousness.

The Jnana Yoga achieves this by engaging the keen reasoning powers of the intellect in philosophical enquiry (Vichara), discrimination between temporary appearances and the permanent Reality beyond, between the non-eternal and eternal (Viveka), and analysis of human experience and perceptions. It investigates into the real nature of all things including the human personality upon all its levels and reflecting and meditating upon these observations and findings. It ever strives to pierce beyond this ever-fluctuating passing show of the phenomenal world and seek the eternal unchanging hidden support and source that makes possible this kaleidoscopic world-show. It advocates the Sadhana of a continuous, firm and determined denial and rejection of your deluded and erroneous identification with non-eternal limiting adjuncts, composing of your false personality and a constant and equally determined affirmation and assertion of your true immortal, ever pure, and ever free spiritual identity, which is one with the universal consciousness. Constant hearing of the spiritual Truths, reflection upon them and sustained deep meditation upon the subtle truths heard and reflected upon, constitute the basic Sadhana of Jnana Yoga.

Bhakti Yoga works to achieve this end of inducing you to withdraw your sentimental and emotional attachments and entanglements from imperfect and perishable things and beings that only bring you disappointment and grief in their train and educates you in the spiritual art of diverting your emotional potential towards the all-perfect imperishable Divine Being, relationship with whom brings endless joy and supreme fulfilment beyond any possibility of disappointment or disillusionment. It destroys all delusion and merges the seeking soul into an ineffable state of illumination and ecstatic bliss.

Bhakti Yoga brings about this sublimation and divinisation of your human sentiment — emotion potential — by setting up an inner relationship of love with God, apparently similar to your love and affection relationship with any dear object of your human love. For example, filial love between parent and child, the intense romantic love between lover and beloved, the deep love between close friends, the love that a devout and loyal servant has towards his master, or the serene and sustained admiration and veneration one has to a higher being whose greatness, grandeur and majesty one has come to know. In order to develop and progress in any one of these inner relationships of purified emotion, Bhakti Yoga lays down the practice of devotion in the form of the following Sadhana; namely, devout listening to the greatness and glories of God, chanting His Divine Name, constantly remembering God in the midst of daily duties and activities, regular daily formal worship of the personal God through a suitable and adequate symbol prescribed in the scriptures, adopting an attitude of humble servitude and offering salutations to the perennial presence of God, who is all-pervading, and ultimately by totally surrendering yourself and offering up of your entire being in an act of supreme dedication and surrender by living your entire life as a servant or a companion of God totally dedicated to Him alone. Other prominent practices of this path, are the taking

recourse to the company of God-lovers, pious pilgrimage to holy places associated with your favourite aspect of deity (Ishta Devata) and earnest prayer for His Grace to obtain true one-pointed and whole-souled love to His lotus-feet to the exclusion of all created things. The sincere devotee upon this path of Bhakti Yoga is not concerned much with the subtleties or intricacies of metaphysics and high philosophy. Intense faith and the cultivation of spiritual sentiment and emotion constitute the very heart of Bhakti Yoga.

Love for the world and sentimental attachment to earthly kith and kin therein becomes the cause of bondage of Samsara to the foolish Jiva devoid of discrimination. The very same love and sentimental attachment when diverted and directed towards the Divine, liberates the Jiva from the bondage of Samsara, confers upon the Bhakta the blessed experience of God-vision.

Raja Yoga, also termed Ashtanga Yoga of Dhyana Yoga, is primarily a system of mental discipline wherein the power of the concentrated mind is made the means for entering into a high state of intense meditation by which the practitioner of Yoga goes beyond the mind into a plane of illumined spiritual consciousness transcending earthly awareness and body-consciousness and attaining to a lofty state of illumined super-consciousness (Samadhi). This liberates you for ever from this wheel of birth and death. Raja Yoga deals directly with the mind, which is seen to be the crux of the entire spiritual problem of bondage and liberation. 'As a man thinketh so he becometh' is the law upon the inner plane of the human psyche. Discipline of the mind is therefore the real key to Blessedness. Such is the approach taken in Raja Yoga. The prominent Sadhanas of this Yoga are the cultivation of virtues and self-control, the spiritualisation of your daily life through purity, penance, spiritual study and prayerfulness. These are followed by the discipline of acquiring absolute

steadiness of the physical body, regulation and controlling the movement of the subtle inner Prana, checking the outgoing thought-current and directing the mind inwards, by withdrawing it again and again from the external sense-objects until the senses themselves gradually abandon their inveterate objectward tendency. The checking of the restless thought activity (Vritti) through unremitting effort and fixing the mind on the inner centre of concentration is the central Sadhana of Raja Yoga. This is borne out by the Yoga teachings of the World Teacher Lord Krishna in His practical instructions to us imparted through His discourses to His Yogi disciple Arjuna in the Sixth Chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita.

Man's expectation of attaining happiness here on earth is a delusion that results in misery. The philosophy and practice of Yoga removes this delusion, corrects this error and by giving the right direction to your life and the living of it. Yoga sets you upon the path of happiness, peace and freedom. Hence, Yoga is indispensable for success in this universal quest of mankind for happiness and fulfilment. It can well claim a place amongst the top priorities of your life. Truly speaking, Yoga must occupy the central place in human life with all other things oriented towards the effective furtherance of the progress of Yoga towards peace and joy. Yoga and its Sadhanas are not to be treated as just a part of your life. But on the contrary the spirit of Yoga must pervade your life.

Beloved Atman, live your life in such a way that all the movements and activities of your life may assume the nature of and constitute an upward and Godward process culminating in the fullest unfoldment of your Divine Consciousness. The Yoga approach and attitude (Bhava) need to be adopted in each and every sphere of your normal life and activity including the home life, professional life, social life and other aspects of your life as well. Life is for Yoga Sadhana. Life is actually Maha-Yoga, if

lived in the manner directed in the Gita, that supreme Yoga Sastra. You have not come here to remain in bondage. You have come here for attaining liberation. You have come here not to die but to realise your immortality. This is the truth. Therefore take up the earnest practice of Yoga right from this very moment. Engage your intellect in spiritual enquiry, discrimination, analysis and reflection. Discard all miscellaneous thinking and focus and fix your entire mind upon the One ever-perfect Divine Reality. Fill your heart with intense love for God. Make Him the one object of your heart's desire. Aspire to adore Him alone. Remember God constantly. Engage in the selfless service of all beings. Carry on all the activities like, your Nitya Karmas according to your Varnashrama Dharma, your duties and obligations including your professional activities with the inner feeling of worshipfulness. Dedicate all activities to God. Offer them at His feet. In this manner spiritualise your normal activities. In the divine words of the World Teacher Lord Krishna, "Be thou a Yogi" (*Tasmat Yogi Bhava*). This is your foremost duty. This is your highest Dharma. In this lies your real and lasting welfare. Herein is the guarantee of true happiness and peace even while dwelling in this body upon this earth. Yoga is not for 'knowing' but it is for 'being and doing.' It is moving towards the Eternal, even while living amidst the non-eternal. Yoga is God's gift to mankind for the attainment of man's highest good. It is ever new and shall ever remain so unto all times. For it is the answer to man's eternal quest for happiness. Human body is an instrument of Yoga. Your home is your place for the practice of Yoga. All fields of human activity comprise natural territory of Yoga in daily life. May this truth be recognised and lived. Then you will have peace and happiness here and now. Yoga can certainly do this for you.

May this science of Yoga which is man's movement towards God systematised into a methodical process, confer immense benefit upon all humanity the world over today, as well as in the days to come. May its eminently rational and time-honoured techniques be

studied and sincerely practised by ever increasing numbers of people all over the world resulting in their highest welfare and happiness. May God bless all beings upon earth. May peace be unto all. Om Tat Sat.

Books suggested for further study

1. Guru Tattwa — Swami Sivananda
2. Essence of Yoga — Swami Sivananda
3. Practice of Yoga — Swami Sivananda
4. Practical Lessons in Yoga — Swami Sivananda
5. Yoga in Daily Life — Swami Sivananda
6. Practice of Karma Yoga — Swami Sivananda
7. Practice of Bhakti Yoga — Swami Sivananda
8. Essence of Bhakti Yoga — Swami Sivananda
9. Japa Yoga — Swami Sivananda
10. Sankitan Yoga — Swami Sivananda
11. Raja Yoga — Swami Sivananda
12. Dhyana Yoga — Swami Sivananda
13. Jnana Yoga — Swami Sivananda
14. Practice of Vedanta — Swami Sivananda
15. Triple Yoga — Swami Sivananda
16. Yoga of Synthesis - Swami Sivananda
17. Gospel of Divine Life — Swami Sivananda
18. Srimad Bhagavad Gita — Swami Sivananda
19. Bhagavad Gita for Students — Swami Sivananda
20. Brahmasutras — Swami Sivananda
21. Principal Upanishads — Swami Sivananda
22. Satsanga and Svadhyaya — Swami Sivananda
23. Sure Ways for Success in Life and God Realisation — Swami Sivananda
24. Inspiring Messages — Swami Sivananda
25. Inspiring Stories — Swami Sivananda
